

MOSES

Michelangelo

Green Fund Book No. 26

The Book To Know

A GUIDE TO BETTER KNOWLEDGE OF THE
BEST OF ALL BOOKS

Part I

Genesis to Kings: God in Israel

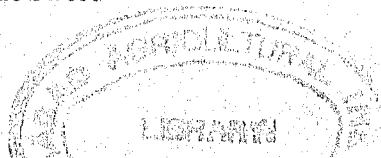
By

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Sunday-School Union*



Philadelphia
American Sunday-School Union
1816 Chestnut Street



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To My Wife
MARY WENTWORTH McCONAUGHY
True Partner
in Study and Service

THE BOOK TO KNOW

Published in Four Parts,
Explaining and Applying the Whole Bible,
Will be Issued as follows:

- I. Genesis to Kings: God in Israel.....*Ready*
- II. Chronicles to Malachi: Old Testament History, Poetry,
and Prophecy*Autumn of 1929*
- III. The Gospels, The Acts, and the Earlier Epistles,
Spring of 1930
- IV. The New Testament Completed, and How to Use It,
Autumn of 1930

About 120 pp. each. Probable price, 75 cents each.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION · PLAN AND AIM	7
CHAPTERS	
1. THE BOOK'S TITLES AND WHAT THEY TELL US..	11
(1) The Book of Books; (2) The Holy Scrip- tures; (3) The Word of God.	
2. THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS—GENESIS	15
3. THE BOOK OF DELIVERANCE—EXODUS	24
4. THE BOOKS OF THE WILDERNESS LIFE—LEVITICUS AND NUMBERS	31
5. ENTRANCE AND CONQUEST—DEUTERONOMY AND JOSHUA	41
FIRST REVIEW, EDEN TO CANAAN	51
6. THE EARLY LIFE IN CANAAN—JUDGES AND RUTH	52
7. THE UNITED KINGDOM I—Samuel; Saul; David: Shepherd, Soldier, and Outlaw—I SAMUEL..	64
8. THE UNITED KINGDOM II—David the King, and His Sons—II SAMUEL	78
9. THE DIVIDED KINGDOM I—Solomon and the Tem- ple; Israel and Judah; Elijah the Prophet— I KINGS	90
10. THE DIVIDED KINGDOM II—The Downward Course: Elisha; Israel Falls, then Judah— II KINGS	105
SECOND REVIEW: ISRAEL AND JUDAH TO THE CAPTIVITY	120

ILLUSTRATIONS

MOSES	<i>Michelangelo</i>	Frontispiece
		FACING PAGE
THE TRIAL OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH	<i>Fritz von Uhde</i>	18
THE STRATAGEM OF GIDEON.	<i>Edwin A. Abbey</i>	58
THE DEDICATION OF SAM- UEL	<i>Francis W. W. Topham</i>	68
AHAB AND ELIJAH	<i>Francis B. Dicksee</i>	100
THE ARROW OF THE LORD'S DELIVERANCE	<i>Francis B. Dicksee</i>	110

INTRODUCTION

PLAN AND AIM

THE Bible never grows old. Its truths apply to every new situation in an ever changing world. Our task is to understand them; to practice them; and thus translate them into living messages, so that both by word and example we make them come with direct and sincere appeal to others.

We all know *something* of the Bible. We have committed some of its choice verses; we have read at least some of its books; we have studied lessons from it on many Sundays. It is quite possible, however, that we know it only in spots; that we have in mind no clear outlines of its history; that we cannot tell the principal facts about even its *leading* characters; and that we do not know how to go to work to get the better knowledge of it which we really desire. For just such people, whether young or old, this book is written.

Our aim in it is to present, in as simple a way as possible, just what all intelligent people, and especially all Christian workers, in Sunday school or elsewhere, need to know. Bright boys and girls in the upper school grades should have no difficulty in understanding it; mature Christians will probably find in it much that they have not learned before, or at least have not so clearly understood.

We have sought, not to *tell facts* about the Bible, but to guide the student in learning the desired facts from the Bible itself. Thus we have aimed to help him to become a better *Bible student*. Concise and bird's-eye as the course may be, it is hoped that no one will follow it faithfully without much of the joy of the discoverer, both finding new truths and seeing new meanings and new suggestions in old ones. He should also learn some *good methods* of study which he can for himself apply to other topics and to different portions of the Book. Best of all, since each chapter studied, whatever it may include of geography and history, of characters and incidents, is certain to include messages of truth bearing upon

daily life, the student will miss the mark who does not catch some inspiration for everyday tasks from words that are themselves instinct with "spirit and life."

To know the lands in which the Bible events occurred helps to make all the historical books more vividly and convincingly true. One section, therefore, in each of the chapters treating those books deals with the geography. The author's own visits to Palestine and other Bible lands have illuminated for him many scenes both from the Old and New Testaments, and from this knowledge and from the many archaeological discoveries of recent years he has freely drawn in writing these geographical sections.

Some knowledge of the main outlines of the chronology is also important and helpful, though such a course as this is not the place for any discussion of the many disputed points involved in an attempt to fix definite dates. For the Old Testament Dr. Willis J. Beecher's *Dated Events of the Old Testament* has been followed as, on the whole, a satisfactory guide.

The correct pronunciation of proper names found in the Bible is puzzling to many of its readers. Self-pronouncing Bibles remove this difficulty, but are not in common use. To meet this situation we have indicated the accented syllable in the names that are least familiar. In well-known names, as for example Abraham, Moses, or David, such help is unnecessary.

No attempt is made to discuss how the Old and New Testaments came into their present form, nor by whom and when the individual books were written. Such points as these—wherever the authorship is not clearly evident, as it is in most of the books—together with other matters of criticism, are left for more advanced study. Here we take the Scriptures as we find them, seeking to make their more intimate acquaintance, and to use them for their intended purpose.

Nor do we discuss doctrinal or creedal views, especially those upon which Christians honestly differ. Recognizing, however, that in the Bible we have a *progressive* revelation of God's will, and of His plan for man's salvation and development, we seek to show how the great central truths unfold and grow to some final statement which conveys their fullest import. Above all else, we seek to promote the yielding of the life to the power of the truth as our study reveals it.

USING THIS BOOK TO BEST PROFIT

The Bible is full of life from cover to cover, and this book about it should be everywhere interesting to the individual reader. At the same time it will be well, wherever possible, to enlist a group to study it together. It may prove no difficult undertaking to gather a group or class to read and discuss it chapter by chapter. Leading others to know, and love, and use the Word of God is service of undying value (1 Peter 1:22-25).

This book needs as its companion volume a good copy of the Bible. Always have, whether at home or in class, your own Bible with which you are at least in some measure familiar. It should certainly have references and maps, and if it has the Helps (Summary of the Books of the Bible, Topical Index, Harmony of the Gospels, etc.) which are included in what are known as Teachers' Bibles, these will be serviceable, just so far as you know how to use them. The Condensed Concordance often found in such Bibles is apt to be more of an aggravation than a help, because of its incompleteness. Passages for which you look will often not be found in it. Better have a separate one of your own.

PRESERVING WHAT IS GAINED

You will need also a notebook. One about the size of your Bible will be convenient. Keep your notes in it, by chapter and chapter subdivisions as given here, so that the notebook and this volume may match and supplement each other.

Review questions will be found at the end of each chapter, and each of the four sections ends with a survey of the ground that has been covered. Use these as helps to fix in mind the chief facts and the leading lessons. *Writing* the answers chapter by chapter will be the best way to do this. Those who use the book as a study textbook in a training course will thus be prepared for any required written work at the end of each section.

The spirit with which we come to the study of a book like this will largely determine what we gain from it. May the same joy and strength as have come into the author's life through the study of the Bible be realized by all who follow the guidance this volume affords.

CHAPTER ONE

THE BOOK'S TITLES AND WHAT THEY TELL US

1. THE BOOK OF BOOKS

IF you take your copy of the Bible and look for the name on the back of its cover, you will no doubt find "Holy Bible." Turn within to the title page and you read, "The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments, translated out of the original tongues." About the two Testaments we will study later. To start with, let us think about the first three words only, "The Holy Bible." The dictionary will tell us that the word Bible was first a Greek word, then a Latin one, and finally an English one. Scholars tell us that when the books of the New Testament were added to those of the Old, and all were written in the Greek language and brought together in one collection, the title given to it was *Ta Biblia*, which means "The Books." When Latin became the common speech of Christian people, and these books were translated into Latin and became the *Vulgate*, that is, the people's book (from *vulgus*, common people), the title given to it was *Biblia*, which is singular, and means "The Book." This change shows how Christians in those early centuries had become convinced that the sixty-six *Books* of the two Testaments really made *The Book*.

Opening its pages, therefore, let us see where this title is applied to it, in whole or in part, and what sort of a book it is said to be.

Let us begin with Joshua 1:8. Read with it the verse that precedes, and the one that follows. Remember the circumstances under which this great charge came, from whom it came, and to whom (v. 1). Now what was "the Book of the Law" which was to guide Joshua aright? Your marginal references will help you to answer. Deuteronomy 31:9, 24-26 will show that Moses wrote it from God's commands, and that it was to be preserved beside the Ark of the Covenant. While

it could not have included all that we now have in the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible), it contained the important portions of the Law, which we find there. Our own laws for daily living which we find in the Bible are much fuller. They contain Jesus' commands, and the Apostles' instruction, as well.

Our success, as well as Joshua's, depends upon our *learning* them so that we can utter them ("out of the mouth"); upon our *meditating* on them so that they become our life principles; and upon our *practicing* them ("observe to do"). Each one of us has our own life task before him as Joshua had his. If we are to know it, and to succeed in it, and to lead others to victory, we must know and obey our book of instructions.

Now turn to 2 Kings 22:8 and read enough of the accompanying story to understand the situation. Josiah, a righteous king, has succeeded his evil father and grandfather. What is the penalty for neglecting and disobeying the Book of the Law? (vs. 16, 17.) What is the one hope of averting judgment and renewing prosperity? (23:1-3.) What is the Book now called (v. 2), and why is this title fitting?

Turn now to Nehemiah 8 and read verses 8 and 18. The people of God have failed to keep their part of the covenant, have suffered the penalty of captivity in the land of their enemies, have returned to God and to their privileges. What steps do they take to establish the restored national life on a sound basis? (v. 1.) What methods do they follow which are still an example to us? (vs. 8 and 18.) *How* and *when* should we read the Book?

2. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

A second title applied to the Bible, or to portions of it, in its own pages, is the *Scriptures*. From the Latin verb *scribo*, "to write," this word means "the writings." Sometimes, as in Romans 1:2, the adjective *holy* is attached; usually we have merely *the Scriptures*, indicating the preëminence of these writings above all others.

Selecting only a few of the passages in which this title occurs, let us read them in their New Testament order, asking ourselves what each tells us regarding our own Bible study.

Matthew 21:42. Where had Jesus read about the Lord's plan for the corner stone? See the reference, Psalm 118:22f. (This little letter *f* means "and following verse"; *ff* means "and following verses.") If his hearers had read it with open minds and willing hearts, what would they have been spared?

Matthew 22:29. Who were in error here? What did they deny? (v. 23.) Today, as then, the chief causes of error are ignorance of God's revealed truth, and doubt or denial of God's supernatural power. How, then, can *we* best avoid and overcome error?

Luke 24:27. What a wonderful Bible study hour that was! With no book in hand (Their copies were written on rolls and could not be easily carried, as ours can.), quoting passage after passage from memory, Jesus traced from Moses to Malachi the passages relating to the promised Messiah. How were his two listeners prepared to profit by their wonderful opportunity? What effect should such Bible study have? (v. 32.)

Acts 17:11. Who are the preachers now? What Bible knowledge did their hearers have on which to base the new truth they are now to hear? What is "the word" which they hear? (See vs. 1-3.) In what spirit do they listen? How do they show genuine interest? And what is the result? (v. 12.) The whole incident is so fine an illustration of profitable Bible teaching on one side, and Bible hearing and heeding on the other, that the name "Bereans" has ever since been a synonym for ability in the use of the Bible.

2 Timothy 3:15. What does Paul here tell us the Scriptures are able to do? If that was true of the Old Testament, the only part of the Bible Timothy could have known from childhood, how much more is it true of the New?

3. THE WORD OF GOD

The title, *Bible*, or "*book*," emphasized the fact that we have a *volume* of truth; the title, *Scriptures*, that this truth was *written* and thus handed down to us; a third title, *the Word*, emphasizes the fact that we have here the very utterance of God's mind toward us.

In many different passages it is spoken of (a) as *the word of God*, indicating its divine source, from which it reaches us through human channels; (b) as *the word of truth*, signifying

its certainty and reliability; (c) as the *word of God's grace*, referring to its highest theme; (d) as the *word of life*, suggesting what it may serve to communicate. Let us gather something of value from a single passage for each of these titles:

Isaiah 40:8. What makes God's Word more lasting than anything we see in nature?

2 Timothy 2:15. The truth must be handled sincerely and honestly, not to win men's praise, but God's approval.

Acts 20:32. What a privilege the Ephesian Christians had in such preaching as that of the Apostle Paul! (v. 31.) Being saved, they needed to grow, and to possess their inheritance. What means would help them? How would it do it?

Philippians 2:15, 16. How are Bible Christians here described, and what is said of their place in the world? What can be more glorious than to become such ourselves, and to help others to do the same?

The one chapter of the Bible which has most to say about the excellence of God's Word is Psalm 119. David Livingstone, the Scotch mill boy, committed it when nine years old, and received a New Testament as a reward. Then he translated it into a holy life, and spread it across the Black Continent, until from his knees he went home to his God, to be welcomed as a workman well approved. So may each one of us, in his own way, and in his own sphere of service.

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER ONE

1. What do we seek to accomplish in this course of study?
2. What three titles have we found applied to the Bible in its own pages?
3. Which of these titles emphasizes the fact that we have in it a *volume* more precious than any other? Which that it contains inspired *writings*? Which that it *speaks* to us from God?
4. For each of these three titles give one passage in which it appears, and tell something you learn from that passage.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS

GENESIS

1. ITS TITLE

THE English names for the Old Testament books are taken, not from the Hebrew, but from the Greek names given in the Sep'tuagint, which is the translation of the Old Testament from the original Hebrew into Greek. The Greek word from which our word "Genesis" comes means "origin," or "beginning," from the verb which means "to come into being." The title is appropriate for a book which records the beginnings of the world, of the human race, of the Sabbath, of worship, of sin, and of the revelation of God made through the chosen family of Abraham.

2. THE KIND OF LITERATURE

Prose narrative, relating history, at first on broad lines, and then by telling the life-stories of individuals. This gives it interest and charm. The story of Joseph, with which the book ends, is most fully told, and is one of the most interesting ever written. The universal charm of these early stories is well illustrated by the fact that when Henry M. Stanley was on his search for Livingstone, and would gather his black "carriers" about him when the caravan made its rest stops, and tell them stories, no other ever appealed to them so strongly or was so often asked for as the story of Joseph.

Hebrew poetry is formed, not by the rhyme of words, but by the balancing of clauses, either by *repetition* of the idea, or by *contrast*, or by *addition*. Such poetic portions are introduced into the prose of Genesis and other Old Testament prose books. The first example is the sword-song of La'mech, found in 4:23, 24. Noah's prophecy about his sons, 9:25-27, is in poetic form. A much longer example of poetry is Jacob's prophecy regarding his sons, and their descendants, in chapter

49. The Revised Version indicates such passages by the form of printing. Watch for them in your reading.

In this and later historical books there are clear evidences that the writers spoke as they were "moved by the Holy Ghost," 2 Peter 1:21. Other accounts of creation and the flood have been found, for other races had their traditions of these great world events, but only the Bible accounts are purified from idolatry, and they stand alone in their simple sublimity of style, their truthfulness of statement, and their spiritual value. To realize this read the first three chapters, and write in your notebook, in a sentence or two under each, what they teach us:

- (1) About God and His relation to the universe: *For example*, God is back of all things. He *was* before the universe began, 1:1; He created all things by His *word* of power, vs. 3, 6, 9, etc.; He did this *in order*, step by step, vs. 5, 8, 11, etc.; He called it all *good*, v. 31;
- (2) About man, his relation to God, and to the rest of the universe;
- (3) About man and woman, and their relation to each other;
- (4) About sin and its penalty;
- (5) About the tempter and the promise of man's triumph over him.

3. AN OUTLINE

The book divides naturally into two parts, eleven chapters in one, thirty-nine in the other. A simple outline is as follows:

	CHAPTERS
1. God and the Human Race.....	1-11
(1) Creation	1, 2
(2) The Fall, and the Spread of Evil.....	3:1-6:7
(3) The Flood, and the Dispersion of Man-kind	6:8-11:26
2. God and the Chosen Family.....	12-50
(1) Abraham and His Sons, Isaac and Ishmael	11:27-25:18
(2) Isaac and His Sons, Jacob and Esau..	25:19-37:1
(3) Jacob's Sons, Joseph and His Brothers.	37:2-50:26

4. THE GEOGRAPHY

The book introduces us to three great early centers of human life on earth—the valley of the Euphra'tes, the valley of the Nile, and the land of Ca'naan lying between them. Turn to a map showing Bible lands (any good Bible should have such) and locate each of these. The Garden of E'den cannot be positively located, but was probably in the first of them. Locate near the source of the Euphra'tes the mountains of Ar'arat, where the ark rested (8:4). Shi'nar and Ba'bel were no doubt along its course, and Ur, from which Abram was called, can be located at ruins now to be seen well down toward its mouth.

In reading the story of Abram, trace on a map of Old Testament lands his journey up the Euphra'tes from Ur to Ha'ran, and thence to Ca'naan, where he lived at She'chem first, and later at He'bron, farther south. In Egypt he denied his wife; at Beth'el he separated from Lot; at Mount Mori'ah he offered Isaac. Locate each of these. The geography helps to fix the facts in memory. In Egypt he was out of the Land of Promise, and his faith weakened. From near Beth'el he and Lot looked down on the plain of Sod'om and Gomor'rah, and Lot chose it, to his undoing. At Mount Mori'ah Abraham was at a high place, which was to become the chosen spot for temple worship, and there he reached the height of self-surrender in his willingness to offer Isaac.

The life of Isaac, most quiet of all the patriarchs, centers in the south (Be'er-she'ba), though he dies, like his father, at He'bron, which to this day is held sacred as their burial place.

Jacob grows up at Be'er-she'ba; dreams at Beth'el; serves La'ban, marries, and has eleven sons born at Ha'ran; journeys back by Peni'el (east of the Jordan) to Ca'naan again, where he stops at She'chem until the wrong done to Di'nah causes bloodshed; moves on to Beth'el, where he renews his vows, and makes his home at He'bron, where he buries his father.

Joseph seeks his brothers at Do'than; is carried down to Egypt, where his brothers later are sent to buy grain, and where they and his old father are saved from the famine and located in the district of Go'shen, east of the Nile, and nearest to Ca'naan.

As you read all these stories of the patriarchs, have your

map at hand, trace their movements, and locate their stopping places. The more one learns of the geography (and of the manners and customs also) of the Bible lands, the more closely all the Bible narratives will be seen to fit into the scenery, the products, the climate, and the life of the people.

5. THE CHIEF CHARACTERS

(1) THE HEADS OF THE RACE.

a. *Adam and Eve*.—What traits do they show? Adam is intelligent. He observes the characteristics of the different animals, and thus gives them names, 2:19, 20. They are at first innocent of evil, and therefore without shame, 2:25. Eve yields to temptation, and takes Adam into it with her, 3:6. Adam is cowardly and shifts the blame to Eve, and even to God ("whom Thou gavest"), 3:12. What advantages had they over us? What great advantages have we over them? Would you change places with them if you could?

b. *Cain and Abel*.—What two classes of mankind may we see represented in each of these two brothers?

c. *Noah*.—How do Enoch and Noah stand out brightly against a dark background? How does the flood story contain promise of God's mercy and of man's rescue? 8:20-22; 9:8-17.

(2) THE PATRIARCHS.

a. *Abraham*, father of the faithful, and friend of God. The term "patriarchs" is applied to the men who ruled over their households in the days when there were no other rulers or priests. When God established His covenant with Abram ("great father"), He changed his name to Abraham ("father of a multitude"). See 17:5. His family was to grow until it included all who, like him, believed in God and in His covenant of grace. His leading place in God's revelation, as well as his great character, accounts for the fulness with which his story is given. It covers chapters 12 to 25, though meanwhile the story of his nephew, Lot, is introduced, and Ish'mael and Isaac have grown up in his household.

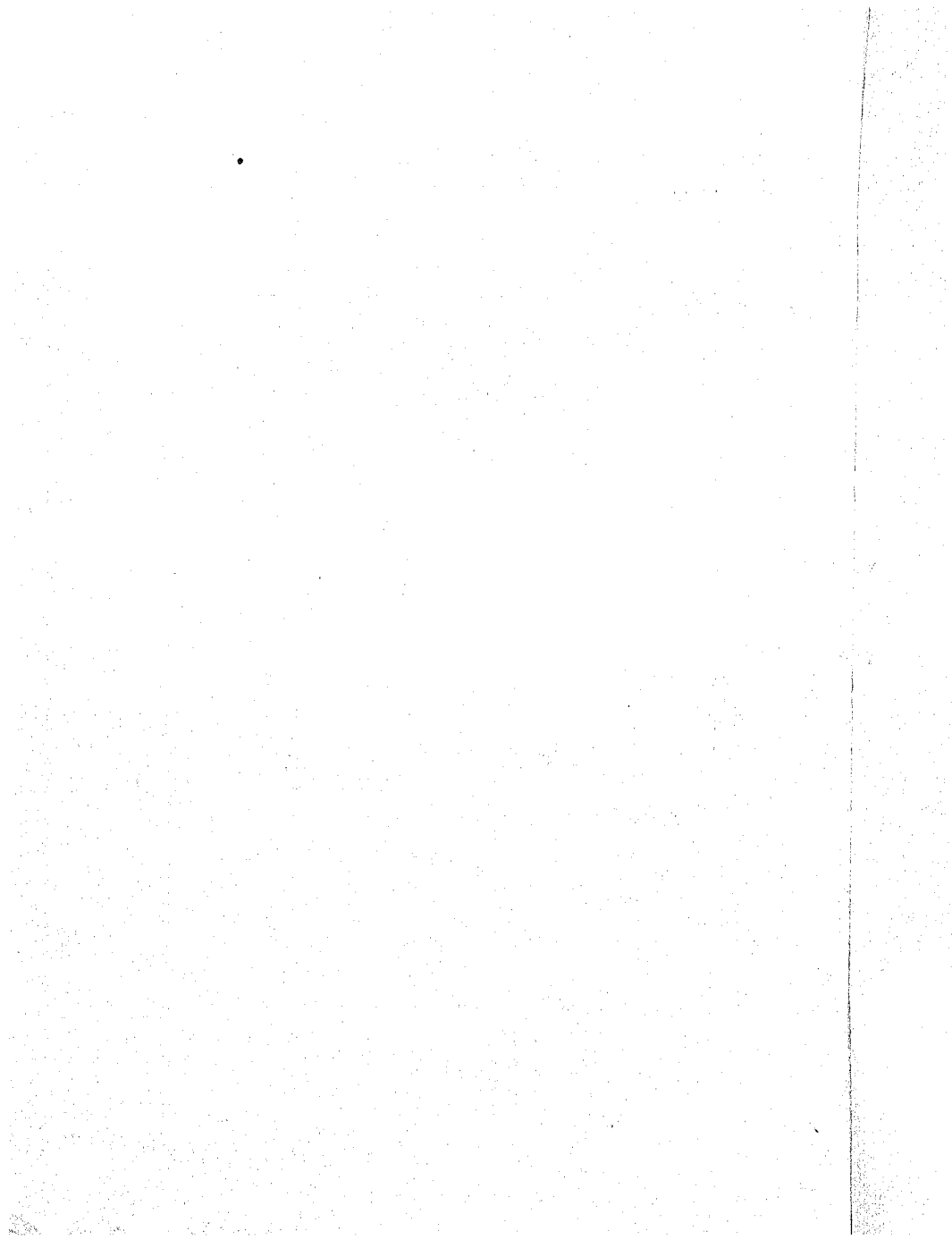
To understand Abraham's career you should be able to tell about the following great events:

(a) His call out of idolatry;



THE TRIAL OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH

Fritz von Uhde

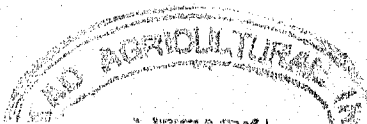


- (b) His first experiences in the land of Ca'naan;
- (c) His journey to Egypt, and return to Beth'el;
- (d) His separation from Lot, and Lot's rescue by him;
- (e) God's covenant with him, promising seed and land, chapter 15;
- (f) His hard treatment of Ha'gar, and God's refusal to accept Ish'mael as his heir;
- (g) The covenant renewed, and circumcision made its sign;
- (h) The visit of the "three men," and the intercession for Sodom;
- (i) The second weakening of faith shown in denying his wife;
- (j) The triumph of his faith in connection with the offering of Isaac.

Tell wherein you think his greatness lies. How does his life show that a man can be rich and yet not selfish or oppressive of others?

b. *Isaac*.—Isaac's story begins in chapter 21 and ends with chapter 35, but most of these chapters are occupied with the deeds of his abler father, and of his more energetic son, Jacob. His name ("laughter") is a reminder of the laugh of *incredulity* which greeted the promise of his birth, turned into a laughter of *joy* when it was fulfilled (18:13; 21:6). He lived a quiet life, in which things were done *for* him more than *by* him. As a lad he was saved from sacrifice at his father's hand; as a young man his wife was found for him by Abraham's faithful servant; as an old man he was deceived by his shrewd son, Jacob. He stands out among the patriarchs for his devotion to his *one* loved wife, Rebekah. He recognizes God's overruling hand in Jacob's blessing, and sends him away to find a wife among his own kin, who in the migration out of idolatry had followed Abram only as far as Ha'ran.

c. *Jacob, and His Brother Esau*.—Abraham was one hundred years old when Isaac was born (21:5); Isaac was sixty when the twin sons were born (26:26). In each case faith was tried, for the fulfilment of the promise (12:2) required the birth of a son. It called, also, for the choice of a son through whom the family line should pass down. This was the birthright which Esau despised, and Jacob valued, but tricked his old blind father to obtain. His name ("sup-



planter," 25:26) was prophetic of his career. He had faith in the promise of God to his grandfather (17:4-8), which was renewed to his father (26:3-25). He obtained his father's blessing by deception (27:27-29). God dealt with him both by *appearances* and by *providences*, to deepen his faith, and to rid him of the trait of guile, by which he sought to secure the fulfilment of the promise. The greatest events in his inner life were the vision at Beth'el (chap. 28) on the way to Ha'ran, and the wrestling at Peni'el on his way back (chap. 32). His life did not please the Lord as his grandfather's did, and, therefore, we find him in trouble with Laban, with Esau, and more than all in his own household.

But, unlike his brother, Esau, who lived only for the present, and got no revelations from God, Jacob lived for the promises, received the blessing, and passed it on (chap. 49) through his sons, who became the heads of the twelve tribes. We do not love him, as we do Joseph, nor *admire* him as we do Abraham, but we recognize his energy, his belief in God and His promises, and we sympathize with him in the discipline of his life.

d. *Joseph, and His Brothers.*—The fascinating story of Joseph covers fourteen chapters of Genesis, beginning with chapter 37. His name ("adding") was given by his mother, Rachel, in the hope of another son (30:25), which was realized in Benjamin. It became descriptive of his character, for he was ever *adding* to the happiness and welfare of those about him. To trace his life story tell of:

- (a) His boyhood dreams. Was he spoiled by his father's favoritism?
- (b) His being sold into Egyptian slavery.
- (c) His experience in Pot'iphar's household. How did he come to know God and thus resist temptation?
- (d) His experiences in prison, and the dreams he interpreted there.
- (e) His deliverance and high promotion, after interpreting Pharaoh's dreams.
- (f) His deliverance of Egypt from famine. Was his plan wise? Was it fair?
- (g) His dealings with his brothers: *Visit One*, Sim'eon is held. *Visit Two*, Benjamin is welcomed, Joseph re-

veals himself. *Finally*, Jacob and his household settle in Egypt.

- (h) His old father's last days. His own end. How does the book close?

How does Judah appear to advantage in these scenes? What blessing falls to him? (49:10, 11.) How does Reuben show his good intentions, but weakness in action?

(3) THE WOMEN OF THE PATRIARCHAL HOUSEHOLDS.

a. Sarah was beautiful (12:11). How did this cause trouble in Egypt? How did God deliver her from danger? How did she treat Ha'gar? (chaps. 16 and 21.) How did she receive the promise of Isaac's birth? (18:9-15.) The son of her old age loved her dearly (24:67). A faithful wife; a devoted mother to her only child, born in old age; harsh in her treatment of the maid by whom she had herself sought to give Abraham an heir; much behind her great husband in faith and in acquaintance with God.

b. Lot's wife loved her home in Sod'om too well, and lost her life for lack of earnestness in fleeing from the judgment upon its sinfulness.

c. Rebekah, Laban's sister, industrious, courageous, and enterprising, as shown by her readiness to take the long journey to Ca'naan to become Isaac's wife; she appreciates the same qualities in her son, Jacob. She helps him to deceive his father (chap. 27), but pays a sad penalty for it; for Jacob goes off, in middle life, to seek his fortune, and she never sees him again.

d. Leah and Rachel, the daughters of Laban, both become Jacob's wives, not in Leah's case by his wish, but by their father's scheming. We sympathize with Leah. She has recompense in the number but not in the character of her sons. Jacob's love for Rachel is one of the finest traits in his character (29:20). Her death at Benjamin's birth was his great life-sorrow, followed later by his belief, which proved a mistaken one, that the sons she had borne him were lost to him also.

The women of this earlier day were homemakers, wives, and mothers, without the more public activities which have come to women in these later times. Rebekah's influence upon

Jacob is evident; and Rachel's upon Joseph, though unrecorded,* may have been quite as great and more beneficial.

6. GOD IN THE BOOK

He constantly appears in the record from the first verse to the next to the last.

How does He deal with Adam? With Cain? With Noah?

What great promise does He make to Abraham (and repeat again and again)? (12:1-3.) How does He renew it to Isaac? (26:24, 25.)

What does He teach Jacob at Beth'el? (chap. 28.) At Peni'el? (chap. 32.)

What does Joseph know of Him? (39:9; 40:8.) Almost every utterance of Joseph recorded in Genesis has something to say about God. Find others besides the two just given.

7. SOME LIGHT FROM THE BOOK UPON LIFE TODAY

(1) It is hard today for one who serves God to prosper and at the same time keep his life clean and unspotted from the world. What does Abraham's life show as to how this was done by him even in his day, and what does it teach as to how it can be done today? Abraham is, on the whole, a shining example of God's man in a godless world; the few places where he slipped may well serve as warnings; his life in general is an inspiration.

(2) Marriage and the home are suffering attacks today from many sources. What do Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Rachel show us about the way to happiness in married life? What failures in these patriarchal homes also have their bearing on failures in home life today?

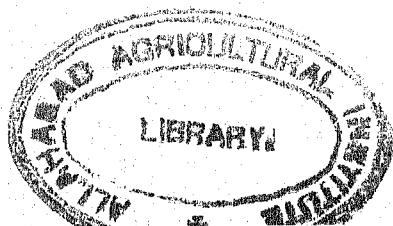
(3) In Jacob we see the life of faith in the living God *emerging* in a character naturally given to shrewdness and deceit. What do we learn from him as to the way of victory in the struggle between the godly and the selfish life?

(4) In Joseph we have a fine example of the true follower of God filling a place of great influence for good in the social and national life of his time. How was he able to do it so well?

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON GENESIS

1. What is the meaning of this book's title?
2. What kind of literature have we in it?

3. What are its two main divisions?
4. On a map of Ca'naan locate She'chem, Beth'el, He'bron, and tell something that occurred in each.
5. Of the principal characters in Genesis name four men and two women, and tell some leading facts about each.
6. How did God deal with Adam? With Abram? With Jacob? With Joseph? Tell in one sentence for each.
7. Give what seem to you three of the finest passages (single verses, or at the most two or three together) found anywhere in this book.
8. What does Genesis tell us about the beginnings (1) of the Sabbath; (2) of worship by sacrifice; (3) of prayer; (4) of God's revelation by means of dreams; (5) of God's revelation by heavenly messengers?



CHAPTER THREE

THE BOOK OF DELIVERANCE

EXODUS

1. ITS TITLE

THE word (from the Sep'tuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament) means "the way out." It is appropriate for a book that describes the deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt, and their way *out* into the wilderness on the way *into* the land of Ca'naan, which had been promised to their great ancestor, Abraham. The Tabernacle service of worship, described in the latter part of the book, is pictured by object lesson, the way *out* of the bondage of sin into the life of fellowship with God.

2. KIND OF LITERATURE

History, in the first nineteen chapters, is followed by *law* in the next four; and then by *description* of the Tabernacle and its contents and the vestments of the priests, given twice; *first*, in directions from God; and *second*, in the account of their execution. Between the two are three chapters in which the *history* is continued, and the *law* compacted into a covenant. The one great poem of the book is the song of chapter 15.

3. AN OUTLINE

	CHAPTERS
1. Deliverance from Bondage	1-12
2. The Journey to Si'nai	13-19
3. The Law	20-23
(1) The "Ten Words"	20
(2) The Civil Code	21-23
4. The Tabernacle Worship	24-40
(1) Instructions	24-31
(2) The Lapse into Idolatry	32-34
(3) Completed and Consecrated	35-40

4. THE GEOGRAPHY

The book opens with the Israelites still in Egypt, but suffering oppression. Pi'thom and Ra-am'ses, store-cities, have in recent times been unearthed from under the sands of north-eastern Egypt (Go'shen). Moses was rescued, in babyhood, from one of the branches, or canals, of the Nile, near Pharaoh's palace at Zo'an, probably the Mem'phis of a later period. Here he grew to manhood. When he fled it was to Mid'ian, a general term for the scattered fertile sections on the western side of the Peninsula of Si'nai. Here he fed Jeth'ro's flocks; and here, later, he led his own people, the Israelites. The journey from Go'shen to Si'nai should be traced on a map, locating Suc'coth ("booths"), from which they start; Pi'hahi'roth and Ba'al-ze'phon on either side of the "Sea of Reeds," which they crossed on a wind-swept track; then onward down along the eastern side of the Red Sea, by Ma'rah, E'lim, and Reph'idim, to Ho'reb (Mount Si'nai).

A good way to fix these places in mind is to make your own outline map of Lower (northern) Egypt and the Peninsula of Si'nai, and on it trace the journeying of the Israelites as far as Si'nai. Then keep this map, in order to continue on it the further movements described in Numbers.

5. THE CHRONOLOGY

From Joseph's death (1:6) to the new king who knew not Joseph (1:8) was a long period, just how long we do not know. The period of oppression covered at least eighty years; for Moses was that old when he stood before Pharaoh (7:7). The journey to Si'nai covered three months (19:1). One year from the Passover, the nation's birthday, and the time of departure from Egypt (12:2), the Tabernacle was completed (40:17) and filled with the glory of God (v. 34).

6. THE GREAT EVENTS

(1) THE STRUGGLE WITH PHARAOH.

Jacob's fruitfulness in sons and grandsons (1:1-5) was but the beginning of great racial growth in the warm climate and fertile soil of the Egyptian Delta. Sprung from sturdy mountaineer stock, they outgrew in numbers and strength the native Egyptians.

The king who set himself to keep Israel under was Ram'ses

the Great, famous in Egyptian history, whose portrait in stone has been preserved in many statues, and whose mummy, with its strong jaw, was discovered in the last century. His successor, Mer-nep'-tah, the Pharaoh whom Moses and Aaron faced, was a far different character, boastful but really weak.

The real struggle was between the false gods of Egypt, and Jehovah. The ten plagues all struck at Egyptian idolatry.

(2) THE MIRACLES.

Miracles are God's *extraordinary* way of working, to which He resorts when there is special occasion for them. This period of deliverance from Egypt is the *first* great period of miracles; the *second* we will find when the line of the prophets begins—and the struggle with false religions—centering around Elijah and Elisha; the *third* we will see confirming the ministry of Jesus and the Apostles.

(a) The miracles in Egypt are miracles of judgment against a ruler who has bitterly oppressed a subject race, and now stubbornly resists the commands of God through Moses. They take the form of plagues, and these not only fit the climate and conditions; they attack the idolatrous religions of Egypt. The first two are aimed at the river Nile, the mother of the national fertility. The *bloody water* and the *frogs* the magicians imitate. See the reference to this, with their names, in 2 Tim. 3:8. But when the *lice* come from the dust, they fail, and recognize the judgment as "the finger of God" (8:19).

Then, to make the issue still clearer between God and His chosen people on one side, and the false gods and the Egyptians on the other, in succession *flies*, *cattle disease*, *boils*, and *hail*, come upon all the land of Egypt, *except Go'shen, where the Israelites live*.

Finally come *locusts*, eating every green thing; and three days of *darkness*, covering the land (except the Israelites' dwellings, 10:23) like a pall. Last of all *the death of the firstborn*, from which all Israel is protected by sprinkling the blood of the Passover lamb on lintel and doorpost.

(b) When Israel finally goes free, the mighty miracle of deliverance at the crossing of the sea (chap. 14) is followed by further lessons of dependence upon God for water and

food (15:22-17:7); and for protection against the enemy (17:8-16).

(3) THE BEGINNINGS OF LIFE AS A NATION.

The Passover (12:1, 2) is made the nation's birthday; just as, with every Christian, life truly begins when he is born again into the Kingdom of God. Then, when the nation's song of freedom has been sung (15:1-18), and God has provided for their needs (15:22-17:16), we have orderly government instituted (chap. 18); the moral law (chaps. 19 and 20); and the civil code (chaps. 21-23), established and declared; and a central place of worship set up, with provisions for sacrifice and worship (chaps. 24-31 and 35-40).

The sin of the Golden Calf, into which Aaron and the people fall while Moses is absent receiving God's directions on the Mount, brings God's righteous wrath (32:7-9) and a drastic penalty (32:25-29); then, through Moses' intercession, God's forgiving grace, and the renewal of His covenant (34:5-17).

(4) LAW AND WORSHIP.

Read chapter 19 to see how carefully and how solemnly God prepared Moses and the people for the reception of the "Ten Words." These words, or utterances, of God sum up man's obligations, first, to his Maker; and second, to his fellow-man. Study them as God's covenant of love, intended for man's highest good. See how the first four require us to worship God *solely, spiritually, sincerely, and statedly*. The fifth, which links the first table with the second, requires honour to parents *as God's representatives*. Show how the next four in succession guard *human life, the family, property, and reputation*; and the tenth controls the *desires* of the heart.

The civil code, called "judgments" (R. V. "ordinances"), contained in chapters 21 to 23, calls for strict, even-handed justice between man and man. The deep depravity of the human heart is suggested by some of the crimes that are legislated against.

The Tabernacle is well called the "Sanctuary," and the "Tent of Meeting" between God and man. Since its plan was received from God (25:9, 40), its form and all its furniture *signify* the true ways of approach to God. These *forms*

are done away with in our Christian worship, which fulfils them, but the truths they stood for remain. Their meaning is taught in the New Testament, especially in the Epistle to the Hebrews. If you can take the time to read an article on the Tabernacle, in a good Bible dictionary, such as Schaff, or Davis, or Hastings, and study the illustrations accompanying it, you will get a clearer idea of the Tabernacle worship, and what was signified by the altar of burnt offering, the laver, the altar of incense, the ark, the table of shewbread, the lampstand, the anointing oil, and the garments of the priests. Above all, learn its great lesson for us, as stated in Heb. 10:19-25.

7. THE CHIEF CHARACTERS

The great characters of the book are the two brothers, Aaron and Moses, and their sister, Mir'iam; and of these Moses is preëminent. He is indeed, in many ways, the greatest of all Old Testament leaders. Aaron was the older brother (7:7). God made him Moses' spokesman to Pharaoh, as the word "prophet" means in chapter 7:1. He is a second figure with Moses in all the interviews with Pharaoh. The one time when he acts alone in Moses' absence he makes a bitter failure by yielding to the people's wishes (32:1-6). When taxed with it, he evades his own responsibility and blames the people (32:21-24). His expression "there came out this calf" has become a byword for excusing oneself from blame. He heads the line of priests, who served by descent, rather than by gifts and call of God as did Moses and the prophets.

Of Mir'iam we remember her ready suggestion to Pharaoh's daughter, which was used to bring about Moses' training by his own mother (2:4-9). She was the oldest of the three, and considerably over eighty when she led the chorus of the women rejoicing over the deliverance at the Red Sea (15:20, 21).

Moses is the great central figure in this, as in the remaining three books of the Pen'tateuch. It will well repay you if you will take the time to go carefully through the whole of Exodus, and read all the statements about him, telling what he said and did. Note: (1) Divine intervention to save his life at birth; (2) The two great periods in his training, each of forty years; *first*, in Egypt, in his parents' home and later in

the palace; and *second*, with his flocks in Midian; (3) His call by God, his hesitation, the commission he receives; (4) His courage, firmness, self-control, and wisdom, in all his different interviews with Pharaoh; (5) His faith and leadership in the trying situation at the Sea (chap. 14); (6) And especially his seven different interviews with God in this book, in which he served as mediator between God and the people: (a) 19:3-6; (b) 19:20-25; (c) 20:21-26; (d) 24:9-11 (with Aaron and his sons and seventy elders of Israel); (e) 24:12-18 and 32:7-20 (with Josh'ua); (f) 32:31-33:6 and (g) 33:12-23 and 34:4-35. Study this last passage particularly to see how God honoured and trusted this great servant of His as He did no other until the coming to earth of His own Son.

8. "I AM THAT I AM"

We must not close our study of this great book without thinking of what it tells us about God. Study this especially for what God says of Himself in the scene with Moses at the burning bush, in chapter 3. Find the verses which show (1) His holiness; (2) His sympathy; (3) His overruling power. Verse 14 contains the great truth, back of all others, that He is the one eternal, ever living God. Note what Moses says of God (calling Him by the new name "Jeho'vah," which God has revealed to him) in his Song of Triumph, in chapter 15. Finally we see Him as the mighty and righteous Ruler of the universe in chapter 19, the holy God, who hates all iniquity (32:7-9), and yet the God of grace and mercy (33:17-22, and 34:5-7).

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON EXODUS

1. What does the name mean and how is it fitting?
2. What four different forms of literary writing have we in this one book?
3. Give the book's four main divisions, and tell, so far as you can, the chapters belonging to each.
4. Make an outline sketch of northern Egypt and the Peninsula of Si'nai and place on it the Nile, the Red Sea, and Mount Si'nai. Then trace the course of the Children of Israel from Go'shen to Si'nai.
5. Tell as many as you can of the ten plagues, and show

how they were meant to show that Jehovah was the one true and living God.

6. Write, in their briefer form, the Ten Commandments, and tell which forbids profanity, and which protects family life.

7. Tell what was meant to be taught by the Passover; by the Altar of Incense; by the Garments of the priests.

8. Give your own opinion of (1) Pharaoh; (2) Aaron; (3) Moses.

9. From the study of Exodus what fuller or better idea have you of God?

10. What do you consider some of its finest passages? Name at least three, giving chapter and verse or verses.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE BOOKS OF THE WILDERNESS LIFE

LEVITICUS AND NUMBERS

1. THEIR TITLES

LEVITICUS is from "Levi," and fits the book which gives the laws of worship to be carried out by the priests and the Levites, who were his descendants. Numbers might as fittingly be called journeyings, but it takes its name from the two numberings, or censuses, of the Israelites, one at the beginning of this book (chap. 1), the other nearly forty years later (chap. 26).

2. KINDS OF LITERATURE

Leviticus consists of *laws*, all concerning worship, or matters closely related thereto, with three *narrative* chapters (8-10), relating also to the priests. Numbers is *narrative*, with various lists and laws, and with bits of poetry inserted in chapters 21, 23, and 24.

3. THEIR OUTLINES

LEVITICUS

	CHAPTERS
1. The Laws of the Offerings	1-7
The Priests Consecrated and Na'dab and Abi'hu's Sin Judged and Atoned for....	8-10
2. The Laws of Cleanness, Including Cleansing from Leprosy	11-15
3. The Annual Atonement for Sin.....	16
4. Other Laws of Purity.....	17-20
5. Special Laws for the Priests.....	21, 22
6. The Religious Festivals.....	23
7. Other Laws, Blessings, and Judgments....	24-27

NUMBERS

CHAPTERS

1. The Preparations for Departure from Si'nai 1:1-10:10
The First Census; the Work of the Levites; the Guiding Cloud.
2. From Si'nai to Ka'desh..... 10:11-12:16
Murmuring; The Seventy Elders; Mir'iam's Judgment.
3. With National Center at Ka'desh..... 13:1-20:21
The Twelve Spies; Ko'rah's Rebellion; Aaron's Rod; Mir'iam's Death; Moses' Sin.
4. From Ka'desh to the Plains of Mo'ab..... 20:22-36:13
Si'hon and Og Overcome; Ba'lak and Ba'laam; Second Census; Joshua Appointed; Mid'ianites Slain; Aaron's Death; Cities of Refuge.

4. THE GEOGRAPHY

Si'nai, already located on your map, is the scene of all Leviticus and of the first ten chapters of Numbers. The next great center is Ka'desh. Two intervening camping spots bear names indicating what happened at them: Tab'e'rah (burning), where the fire of Jeho'vah burned among the people because of their murmuring; and Kib'roth-Hatta'avah (graves of lust), where the quails the people lusted for bred plague and death. The general direction of the march is northeast. Ka'desh is an oasis in the northeastern border of the Wilderness, not far south of the Promised Land. The modern Ain Ka'dis ("Ain" in all these Arabic words means fountain, or spring), discovered by Dr. Henry Clay Trumbull (See his book, *Ka'desh-barne'a*), is generally accepted as the spot, though others, including Dr. William T. Ellis, recently (in his book, *Bible Lands Today*), argue for Ain Gu'derat, not far distant. Mark on your map the Ar'abah (the great depression north of the eastern arm of the Red Sea); Mount Hor, where Aaron died; and then, moving northward on the east side of the Dead Sea, E'dom and Mo'ab, and the river Ar'non, which is the border between them. Then draw your line to show the movements of Israel, first from Si'nai to Ka'desh,

then from Ka'desh by Mount Hor to the Plains of Mo'ab, opposite Jericho and below Mount Ne'bo.

5. THE CHRONOLOGY

The journey from Egypt to Si'nai took about three months (Ex. 19:1). The stay at Si'nai, covering from Exodus 19 to Numbers 10, lasted about one year (Num. 10:11). The journey from Si'nai to Ka'desh may have taken another three months. With Ka'desh as national headquarters we then have a period of wilderness pastoral life, covering some thirty-eight years, most of which is passed over without mention between Numbers 19 and 20. The gathering together at Ka'desh, in Numbers 20:1, is evidently the same as that mentioned in Numbers 33:36 in the long list of the camping places. From Ka'desh to the Plains of Mo'ab covered the last one of the forty years (Num. 33:38).

6. THE GREAT EVENTS

These are found chiefly in Numbers. They show the constant tendency of the people, bred in a hot climate, only just delivered from slavery, and as yet undisciplined by independent experiences, to fall into murmuring and rebellion.

(1) *The Sin of the New Priests*, Aaron's sons, Na'dab and Abi'hu, Leviticus 10. Their death was a necessary object lesson to teach exact obedience and reverential approach to God in all the worship at the altar. The command of verses 8-11 may indicate what led them into their sin.

(2) *The Numberings*.—Numbers 1 and 26. These were by tribes and families, as a basis of army organization and for allotment of land when Ca'naan was possessed (26:52). All above twenty years of age were regarded as fit for war. The Tribe of Levi was excepted, being set apart for the service of worship.

The first numbering totaled 603,550 (1:46) fighting men; all these, except Ca'leb and Joshua, had died before the second numbering, but its total is almost the same, 601,730 (26:51). These numbers seem very great. It must be remembered that life was very simple, little clothing was required, and there are indications that the Wilderness had many more fertile oases then than now. Dr. F. E. Hoskins, Presbyterian missionary for a lifetime in Syria, has written a book presenting evidence,

with which other scholars agree, that the Hebrew word translated "thousands" was used, not in an exact, but in a freer sense equivalent to families, and that the total was by no means so large as the numbers seem to us to indicate.

(3) *The Murmurings*.—These were numerous.

(a) The first is typical of all (Num. 11:1-3). No cause is stated. Their words were evil in God's ears. Judgment came; this time in the form of fire. Hence the name Tabe'rah. Moses prayed for them; the judgment was stayed.

(b) The second was a *food riot* (11:4-34). In all history these have been most difficult to deal with. The people lusted after the fish and vegetables of Egypt. They wearied of the manna, which at first had seemed to them a heavenly gift. This time Moses lost his usual patience and faith. As a result seventy elders were chosen to share the responsibility with him and to receive a portion of the Spirit that had been bestowed upon him. This was a good thing for them, if not for him. Notice the searching question of v. 23. God sent the food longed for, but it brought death with it. The name of the camp, Kib'roth-Hatta'avah (graves of lust) impresses the solemn warning of the incident.

(c) A far greater event in its consequences is the murmuring that followed *the report of the spies* (14:1-3). This turned the people back from the southern border of Ca'naan to wander for forty years in the wilderness. Their lack of faith in God as their leader showed their unreadiness for the conquest of the land. While we cannot excuse them for this, and God did not (vs. 11, 12), yet evil was overruled for good, and this generation, bred in the hot climate of Egypt, and in slavery, was replaced by a hardier generation, freeborn in the desert.

(d) Then, in chapter 14:39-45, we have *the rash attempt* of the people, without leadership of God or Moses, ending in defeat at the hand of the Am'alekites and Ca'naanites, dwellers in the land they are to possess. The name *Hor'mah*, marking this disaster, means "devoted," a term often found later in Israel's wars, applied both to the defeated and the spoil. When, at the end of the wanderings, they start afresh under divine leadership, the same word is used to mark the destruction of their foes (21:1-3).

(e) More serious even than defeat from outside foes was

rebellion within the camp (chap. 16). This was led by Ko'rah, a Levite, and Da'than and Abi'ram, of the tribe of Reuben, Jacob's oldest son. It was an ambitious revolt against the leadership of Moses and Aaron. It showed Moses' character at its strongest and finest. The earthquake and the plague were severe judgments, but no doubt needful—surgical treatment—for rebellion and disobedience. The blossoming of Aaron's rod miraculously indicated that God had chosen him and his family for the priesthood.

(f) Another murmuring for *lack of water* at Mer'ibah ("strife") leads Moses to the one act of impatience, and of failure to honor God, which prevents his entrance into the Promised Land (20:1-13).

(g) Shut out from passage through E'dom, they have to take the harder way around to the east of it, and again complain. *Fiery serpents* are the penalty this time, and the brazen serpent uplifted on its pole becomes the remedy. Jesus, in John 3:14, 15, refers to this as typical of His own uplifting on the cross to save sinners.

(4) *Preparing for the Conquest of Ca'naan.*

(a) *Journeyings* follow, and *victories* over Si'hon and Og, the memory of which is preserved in bits of song (chap. 21).

(b) Ba'lak, king of Mo'ab, seeks to stay their passage by the enchantments of a seer. Ba'laam comes from his home by the River (that is, the Euphra'tes) and, although his heart is with Ba'lak and against Israel, and he strives to serve his employer and win the promised reward, he finds his mouth filled with prophetic blessings upon Israel, which he cannot help uttering. His error is pointed out to us in 2 Peter 2:15 and Jude 11. Chapter 22:12 should have settled the matter for him; but, in spite of his noble answer in v. 18, he hopes to reverse Jeho'vah's decision, v. 19. God's permission and warning in v. 20 test him, and the angel further warns him, vs. 21-30. The story is picturesquely told. The conduct of his ass spoke to his conscience. He went on, but only to utter remarkable prophecies about Israel's future. Later he gave counsel which tempted the Israelites to harlotry with Mo'ab-itish women; and paid the penalty with his life (25:1-16; 31:16; 31:8).

(c) Moses, warned of God that his end is near, desires God to indicate his successor, and *Joshua is chosen* (27:12-23).

(d) Reuben, Gad, and half of Manas'seh, tempted by the pasturage available for their cattle, seek permission to *settle east of the Jordan*. Upon their offer to join their brethren in conquering the Promised Land over ("west of") Jordan, Moses grants their request.

(e) Six *cities of refuge* for the manslayer and forty-two other cities are to be placed throughout the tribes, that the Levites occupying them may be a leavening religious influence. The manslayer is to have a fair trial and, if no premeditated murder can be proved, his life is safe in his city of refuge until the high priest dies, when he is free. This provision was to prevent murder and at the same time hinder feuds.

7. LAWS OF WORSHIP

(1) *The Offerings on the Altar* (Leviticus 1-7). There were five: burnt, meal, peace, sin, and trespass. All except the meal were offerings of slain animals. The kind of animal varied according to the ability of the worshiper, thus making provision for the poor.

The *burnt offering* signified the *dedication of the offerer to God*, the animal taking his place. In it there were four successive steps: (1) the *presentation* of the animal, the offerer solemnly identifying himself with it by laying his hand upon it, thus making it his substitute; (2) the *slaying* of it; then the priests (3) *sprinkle or pour the blood* around the altar, and (4) *burn the whole animal* on the fire on the altar.

The *peace offering* differed in that it was shared, part burned before God, and the rest eaten by the priests and the offerer. This indicated fellowship, not an offering to *make* peace with God, but a thank offering of one *at* peace.

The *meal offering* consisted either of the fine meal itself, or of the baked or fried cakes made from it. Since "bread is the staff of life," this indicated the dedication by the offerer of his property as well as of himself.

Recognizing that sin is in every life, and needs to be atoned for, the *sin offering* made provision therefor, both for rulers and for the common people; for the whole congregation where the sin was shared by all, and even for the priest. While it was general, recognizing the evil in human nature, the *tres-*

pass offering related to some particular offense, and included *confession* and *restitution*.

This emphasis on shedding of blood made the Hebrews the one nation of that earlier day with a clear sense of the need of righteousness and purity in the relations of daily life. The emphasis of the whole worship at the Tabernacle, and later in the Temple, was upon sin and its forgiveness. See how this note rings out again and again here, Leviticus 4:26, 31, 35; 5:10, 13, 16, 18; 6:7; and see the fulfilment of it in Jesus' words, in Luke 7:48 and elsewhere. The Cross replaced the Altar.

(2) *The Fast and the Feasts.* (Leviticus 16 and 23; see also Ex. 23:14-17.) One day, the great Day of Atonement was made central in the year to fix the thoughts of all upon the Holy God as the forgiver and remover of sin. In a most solemn ritual, not only was sacrifice offered, but the sins of the nation were confessed upon the head of the Scapegoat, and then he was driven away into the wilderness. Later the great underlying truth is taught in such passages as Psalm 103:12; 1 Peter 2:24.

But religion has joy and fellowship as well as forgiveness; and so, three great *feasts* were instituted: (a) *The Passover*, the week of the full moon nearest the spring equinox, celebrating the nation's birthday in the deliverance from Egyptian bondage (Lev. 23:4-8); (b) *Harvest*, fifty days after the day when the first sheaf of new grain had been waved before God as a sign that all was recognized as coming from Him. See Leviticus 23:9-21. This later became known as Pentecost (from a word meaning fifty) and had its fulfilment in the first great ingathering into the Church (Acts 2) as Passover had in Crucifixion (1 Cor. 5:7); and (c) *Tabernacles*, the week of the full moon nearest the autumn solstice (Lev. 23:33-36), when Israel dwelt in booths as a reminder of the wilderness life.

In addition to these annual feasts, which promoted unity in the national life and made religion central in it, the observance of *the Sabbath* was a fundamental principle in the Law (Ex. 20:8-11 and Lev. 23:1-3). Not merely was the seventh day a holy day, but the seventh month was specially sacred (Lev. 23:23), and the seventh year was a rest year for the land (25:1-7).

Moreover, the day *after* the Sabbath became in the Passover week the wave-sheaf morn (Lev. 23:11), fulfilled when Christ became the "first fruits" from the grave (Matt. 28:1); the day after the *seventh* Sabbath, the fiftieth day (Lev. 23:16), became Pentecost (Acts 2:1), the birthday of the Church; and the year after the seven weeks of years, the fiftieth year, was made a Year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:10), symbol of this gospel era in which we live. See Isaiah 61:1, 2, and notice Luke 4:19, where Jesus stopped when He read that passage in His home synagogue. We are still in the year of God's favor, and not yet in the day of His vengeance. We still have the invitation Jesus sounded forth on the day after the Sabbath, "The great day" of the Feast of Tabernacles. See John 7:37.

(3) *The Priests and the Levites.* When, during Moses' absence in the mount, the people forsook God for a golden calf, the sons of Levi responded to the call, "Who is on the Lord's side?" and did the drastic work needed to eradicate the evil (Ex. 32:25-29). Later, when the Tabernacle was ready, cleansed, and purified, they were set apart for its service (Num. 8:5-13). From ages 30 to 50 they served, in weekly "shifts," carrying it from place to place, setting it up and taking it down, and attending to its "work"—fuel for its fires, oil for its lamps, etc.

Out of the Levites the sons of Aaron and their descendants, taking the place of *all* the first-born saved on the first Passover night (see Exodus 13:1, 2, 15), were set apart to the priesthood (Ex. 30:30). The attempt of Ko'rah and others to usurp their place was severely judged (Num. 16), and by the budding of Aaron's rod God indicated His choice (chap. 17).

They were permitted to marry, but must live in purity, keeping themselves "holy unto the Lord" (Lev. 21). They offered sacrifices, blew the trumpets, conducted the musical services, greatly developed later under King David. They were to be consecrated to their tasks by being clothed with the garments of beauty and holiness, by the touch of blood to ear, hand, and foot, and by the pouring upon them of the anointing oil. See Leviticus 8; also Psalm 133:1, 2. The writer to the Hebrews shows how all this was fulfilled, and more than fulfilled, in our Great High Priest, Jesus, our Lord, Hebrews 4:14-16 and 7:23-28.

For those belonging to other tribes who desired to set them-

selves apart to a specially consecrated life provision was made in the vow of the Naz'irite; that is, "the consecrated one." This involved total abstinence from the fruit of the vine, no contact with any dead body, and during the period the vow lasted no use of razor, or cutting of hair (Num. 6:1-21). Samson was such a one in Old Testament times, but not true to the spirit of consecration which the vow expressed. John the Baptist is the outstanding New Testament example.

(4) *Other provisions to promote holy living* included the laws regarding clean and unclean food, Leviticus 11; regarding childbirth, Leviticus 12; leprosy, Leviticus 13 and 14; and bloody issues, Leviticus 15. All served to enforce the great command, "Be ye holy; for I am holy."

Back of all these provisions for worship is the great truth conveyed in the beautiful blessing which the high priest was to bestow upon the people (Num. 6:23-27), the desire of God that they should "put His name upon the Children of Israel" so that He might "bless them."

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON LEVITICUS AND NUMBERS

1. How do the contents of these two books agree with their names?
2. What are some of the most interesting and important matters treated in Leviticus?
3. Trace on a rough map a line showing the movements of the Israelites from Si'nai to Ka'desh and from Ka'desh to the Plains of Mo'ab. Locate Mount Hor and tell what happened there. What great event happened at Ka'desh-bar'nea that lengthened the stay in the Wilderness?
4. Describe briefly two occasions on which the people murmured against God, one on which Moses lost his usual patience, and another which led to the setting up of a brazen serpent on a pole as an object of faith.
5. Who led rebellion within the camp, and how was it punished? Who attempted to curse Israel, and ended by blessing them? What did he prophesy?
6. Mention the five offerings that were to be made to God, and tell what was the central idea in each.
7. For what were the Levites chosen, and why? Who only could be priests? What was the Naz'irite vow?
8. Mention the one great annual Fast and the three great

Feasts. What did each of these commemorate, and what did the observance of each teach?

9. How did a Sabbath of days, of weeks, and of years enter into their life? also a fiftieth day and a fiftieth year?

10. How was all this meant to teach consecration to God? confession and pardon of sin? joy and fellowship in the service of God?

CHAPTER FIVE

ENTRANCE AND CONQUEST

DEUTERONOMY AND JOSHUA

1. THEIR TITLES

DEUTERONOMY means the "second law," so called not because it contains a different law from that given at Mount Si'nai, but because it *repeats* that Law in fuller form in the final addresses of Moses on the threshold of the Promised Land. The book of Joshua takes its name from the leader who succeeded Moses, and describes the events connected with the conquest and settlement of the land, under his leadership.

2. KINDS OF LITERATURE

Deuteronomy consists of addresses delivered by Moses to the people as his own end drew near. They sum up the experiences of the forty years in the Wilderness, and repeat to the new generation, with exhortation and appeal, the laws that had been given to their fathers. The book closes with two great poems—Moses' song, in chapter 32, and his prophetic blessing of the tribes, in chapter 33, followed by the sublimely simple *narration* of his death.

The first half of Joshua (1-12) consists of picturesque *narration*, describing the conquest, and ending with a summary of the achievements of Israel under Joshua's leadership. The second half (13-24) consists chiefly of *lists* and *boundary lines*, describing the allotment of the land to the tribes.

3. OUTLINES

DEUTERONOMY

CHAPTERS

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. The Lessons of History..... | 1-4 |
| Moses Recounts God's Dealings with Them | |
| throughout the Forty Years. | |

	CHAPTERS
2. The Law Solemnly Recapitulated.....	5-26
The "Ten Words;" Idolatry; Clean and Unclean; Tithes; Feasts; True and False Prophets; Landmarks; First Fruits.	
3. Provisions for Preserving and Impressing the Law	27, 28
To Be Written on Plastered Stone; Curses and Blessings; Solemn Warnings.	
4. The Solemn Covenant To Keep the Law..	29, 30
5. Moses' Last Words; Last Act; Song; Blessing; Death; Epitaph.....	31-34

JOSHUA

	CHAPTERS
1. Conquest	1-12
(1) Joshua Succeeds Moses as Leader....	1
(2) Preparing for the Campaign.....	2-5
Spies Sent; Jordan Crossed; All Males Circumcised; Passover Kept; The Prince of the Host.	
(3) Jericho Captured and Destroyed.....	6
(4) Ai; Defeat, then Victory. Achan's Sin	7, 8
(5) Gibeon; Strategy; Five Kings Overthrown	9, 10
(6) Hazor; Final Victory in the North...	11
(7) The Roll of the Defeated.....	12
2. Settlement	13-24
(1) Division of the Land.....	13-19
(2) Cities of Refuge, and Levitical Cities.	20, 21
(3) The Altar Beyond Jordan.....	22
(4) Joshua's Farewell Address.....	23
(5) The Covenant Renewed, Joshua Dies.	24

4. THE GEOGRAPHY

Moses' farewell addresses are delivered on the Plains of Mo'ab, east of the Jordan. (See Deuteronomy 1:1, 5; 4:46.) In the first of these addresses, chapters 1-4, note the places he mentions as he recounts their movements from Ho'reb (Si'-nai) to Ka'desh, and then by Mount Hor to the Plains of Mo'ab. These should be already marked on your sketch map.

Look each one up to aid in fixing their course in your memory. Be sure to locate Mount Ne'bo (Pis'gah is one of its shoulders) from which Moses viewed the Promised Land.

With Joshua the new onward movement begins. Locate the territory of Reuben, Gad, Manas'seh, to see how important it was that they should not remain behind in it, but should accompany their brethren to the conquest. Mark the Ford of the Jordan opposite Jericho, where they crossed, and Gil'gal and Jericho, near together.

Then locate A'i at the head of the valley leading northwest from the Jericho plain into the heart of the land. See how fatal defeat there would have been as blocking that best path of entrance.

Locate Gib'eon, a little to the west of A'i, to show the fraud of the Gib'eonites in pretending to have come from far. Notice the first mention of Jerusalem in Joshua 10:1, in connection with the league of the five kings, with Adon'ize'dek, king of Jerusalem, at its head. Gib'eon, though far inferior later, seems at that early day to have been more influential than Jerusalem (10:2).

Then locate Ha'zor away up in the north of Ca'naan, whose king (or chieftain) formed the combination of all the northern peoples; and the Waters of Me'rom, above the Sea of Galilee, near which Joshua defeated this confederacy.

For the latter half of the book consult a map of Ca'naan as divided among the twelve tribes. Notice especially the important position assigned to Judah in the south, and E'phraim in the north-center. Without any attempt, of course, to fix the multitude of places mentioned in chapters 13 to 19 to show the boundary lines, try to remember the *general* location of each of the twelve tribes (Joseph had two portions, E'phraim and Manas'seh, while Levi was scattered through the other tribes). To understand the Old Testament it is as important to fix these in mind as it is to be able to locate the thirteen original states in order to understand American History.

Locate the three cities of refuge on one side of the Jordan and the three on the other, to appreciate how their location favored a manslayer fleeing from *any* part of the land.

Most important of all locate She'chem, between Mount E'bal and Mount Ger'izim, and observe how its central location made it the suitable gathering place for *all* the tribes to hear

Joshua's last address and there renew the National Covenant to serve God.

Finally, in the hill country of E'phraim, on the mountain ridge that runs through the land from north to south, locate Joshua's own home and burial place at Tim'nath-se'rah, and the place near She'chem where they buried the bones of Joseph which they had carried with them from Egypt all the miles and all the years until now. The spot, probably correctly identified, is marked to this day by a stone structure called Joseph's Tomb.

5. THE CHRONOLOGY

The book of Deuteronomy reports addresses delivered within the period of about a month (Deut. 1:3), but containing references to events occurring throughout the forty years.

Joshua was a young man, serving as Moses' minister (or bodyservant) when the Commandments were given at Si'nai (Ex. 32:17). Thirty-nine years later, at Moses' death, he succeeds to the leadership, and the book of Joshua begins. At its end we have the record of his death at 110. The period of conquest and settlement, therefore, described in the book, must have covered about fifty years.

6. THE GREAT EVENTS

(1) MOSES' FAREWELL ADDRESSES.

The book of Deuteronomy contains the report of addresses by the great leader, Moses, which played an important part in preparing the nation for the events described in Joshua.

(a) *The First Address*, chapters 1-4. Beginning with the departure from Ho'reb (Si'nai) (1:6), he selects such incidents in their history as would emphasize his keynote teaching; *i. e., obey God and possess the land*. Show, for example, how the following would bear on this great truth: The appointment of "heads," under Moses, to make God's will known to the people; The sending of the spies. (See "take possession," 1:21; "ye hearkened not," 1:43; "begin to possess," 2:31, etc.) Compare 2:14 with 1:2; thirty-eight years for eleven days journey! Why? Notice, too, the ringing exhortation "Fear not," in 1:21; 3:2; etc. Do not fail to get the note of pathos in his reference to his personal disappoint-

ment, 3:23-28. Why was he not to go? To what penalty of disobedience does he refer in 4:3?

His exhortation to Israel is in many ways just as applicable to us today. Notice, for example, 4:9, 15, 23. Compare 4:24 with 4:31, and study (commit if you can), and heed the magnificent passage (4:32-40) with which this first address closes.

(b) *The Second Address* (chaps. 5-26) contains a recapitulation, for the new generation, of the laws given to their fathers, and already recorded in the earlier Wilderness books. Chapter 5, for example, contains again, with slight verbal differences, the Ten Commandments already given us in Exodus 20. Moses rehearses the story of how the Law was given through him at Mount Si'nai, and of how God had dealt with them since (See for example 5:28, 29; 7:6-11; 8:2-6, etc.) to bring them near in heart to Him, and to impress upon them the absolute necessity of reverence and obedience (10:12-22). There are many other such passages, both sublime and searching, in this great book, too little known to us. A particularly fine one foretells the line of the prophets, and its great Head (18:15-19). Notice the solemn declaration of a union as close and sacred as that of marriage between God and the people (26:16-19), with which this long and solemn recapitulation of the Law closes.

(c) *Preserving and Passing On the Law*, chapters 27, 28. With no papyrus or vellum available for writing, the Law was to be written on plastered stones set up on Mount E'bal in the center of the land. This preserved it for coming generations. To impress it upon the present one, curses were to be solemnly pronounced from Mount E'bal on all who should break it, and blessings from Mount Ger'izim upon all who should faithfully obey it. These two mountains face each other with a narrow valley between, and the spots from which these Curses and Blessings are supposed to have been spoken are shown to this day. Nowhere else in Scripture are the consequences of disobedience so searchingly set forth as here in chapter 28.

(d) *Solemnly Pressing It All Home*, chapters 29-31. To the Covenant made between the nation and God at Ho'reb is now added, on the threshold of their entrance to the land, a moving appeal to the new generation, and to those that are to follow them. Get the flavor of its solemnity and intensity by reading 29:10-13 and 30:11-20.

(e) *Moses' Final Words and Deeds*, chapters 31-34. Hear his ringing note of courage spoken both to the nation (31:1-6), and especially to the new leader (31:7, 8). A copy of the Law is written, and is entrusted to the priests, to be kept beside the Ark of the Covenant, and to be read to the people every seventh year at the Feast of Tabernacles (31:9-13, and 24-29). Joshua is given a final charge (31:14-23), and a song to be taught to the people and sung by them to keep alive the memory of God's dealings. This song, chapter 32, is a magnificent poem full of inspiration. Among its finest passages are vs. 8-14 and 29-31. Last of all, after his view of the Promised Land (32:48-52), we have his blessing of the Tribes, chapter 33, full of references to the characteristics of each. Among its finest verses are the closing ones, 27-29.

(f) Last of all, in the dozen verses of chapter 34, with great brevity and simplicity, we have the account of the end of this wonderful life, 1-8, and its epitaph, 10, 11. One of the finest of modern sacred poems, based on this chapter, is Mrs. C. F. Alexander's "By Ne'bo's Lonely Mountain."

(2) THE CONQUEST OF CA'NAAN, UNDER JOSHUA, Joshua 1-12.

(a) *Commission and Preparation*, chapter 1. One of the finest passages ever written regarding the preparation of a worker for a task we have in 1:1-9. Familiar as they may be, study afresh to get their exact meaning and their uplifting spirit, verses 8 and 9. Then study the two absolutely essential elements of preparedness to which Joshua first addresses himself: first, the commissariat; and second, the harmonious coöperation of the whole force.

(b) *The Campaign Against Jericho*, chapters 2-6. The strong walled city of Jericho blocked their path. Remains of its walls have been unearthed within the past few years.

Spies ascertain the spirit of its defenders (2:24). Led by the Ark of the Covenant, they cross Jordan dryshod in flood season (3:14-17). Memorial stones in the bed of the stream, and at Gil'gal on the western bank, are set up to tell the story to succeeding generations (chap. 4). Circumcision of all males, neglected during the wilderness life, is performed (5:2-9). This was the sign of God's covenant with Abraham, and its performance now emphasized their dedication to God

and their dependence upon Him. The Passover is kept; the wilderness now being left, the manna ceases (5:10-12).

Most important of all, as Moses had met his Leader in the burning bush, so now Joshua gets a vision of the unseen but mighty Captain of the Host, whose directions he is to take, and under whom he is to serve (5:13-15). From this Commander he gets strange instructions in regard to the attack upon Jericho. Faithfully obeyed, they bring victory. Notice the seven priests and their seven trumpets, the seven days, and the seven circuits on the seventh day; notice, too, the Ark, in the center of the marching host, indicating the presence of God; the impressive silence, and the final shout of victory. A strange plan of campaign, certainly, from a military point of view, but one calculated to mystify the foe, to exalt God, and to impress upon the people their dependence upon Him.

(c) *The Campaign Against A'i*, chapters 7 and 8. Without directions from his Commander, and, so far as we are told, without seeking them, Joshua takes the advice of his spies and sends a small force to attack the little city which holds the key position in the pass by which they are to make their way into the heart of the land. Overwhelming defeat makes "the hearts of the people melt" and drives Joshua to his face before God. The sins of greed and disobedience are revealed, the sinner is brought to light, his booty found and burned, and he and his family, who, since the treasure was hidden in the family tent, must have shared in the guilty knowledge of it, if not in the very deed, are stoned and then burned in the valley of A'chor (troubling) as the troublers of Israel (7:22-26). A drastic punishment, but necessary at this critical hour, as a lesson to the nation, and to save many other lives. Compare it with the case of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-11.

With the sin of Israel thus eradicated, A'i is again attacked, this time in full force and with strategy. The city is captured and burned, and all its inhabitants put to the sword.

No follower of Jesus who has absorbed the spirit of His teachings, can read of such bloody deeds as were done in these campaigns against Jericho and A'i, and others that have preceded or are to follow, without shrinking, and questioning whether such deeds really had God's approval. Shall we say that the end justified the means? that God, to save the world, must train one nation in the knowledge of Himself and His

ways? that for such training a fit land was needed and that Ca'naan was such a land? that its inhabitants were sinful and godless, and that shedding their blood did not change their immortal destiny?

True as all this is, does it not come closer to the heart of the matter to say that knowledge of God comes only through the experience of His dealings with us and ours with Him; that the knowledge of Him which Israel had at this time was both imperfect and incomplete; and that what was permitted then is far from what He expects of us, with our far fuller revelation of Him and of His character and will, through prophets and apostles, and especially through His Son our Lord? Our campaigns are not military, but missionary. *We* are to conquer by truth, and love, and service; not by the sword, nor by the more devastating methods of modern warfare.

In studying these Old Testament lessons we must always seek to find the eternal underlying truths, about God, and life, and our dealings with our fellows, and then apply these to *our own* conduct, and relationships, and duties, as Joshua did for his day with his altar in Mount E'bal, his writing of the Law, his repetition of the blessings and the cursings (8:30-36).

(d) *Campaigns South and North*, chapters 9-12. From time immemorial fighting is not by force only, but by *wile* and *guile*, and of these the Gib'eonites made skilful use (9:3-16). Failing to ask counsel of God (v. 14), and disobeying the express prohibition of Exodus 23:32, the leaders make a treaty with them. When, however, they learn the truth, they do not tear it up as a "mere scrap of paper," but successfully defend the Gib'eonites when their neighbors attack them. The five kings of the south are overthrown (chap. 10), and the three kings of the north (chap. 11). The giant An'akim, who had so frightened the ten spies, Joshua's companions, forty years before, are all destroyed, except a few down in the Philistine plain, of whom we shall find a descendant later in Goli'ath of Gath. After all this bloody fighting it is good to read the last sentence of the chapter.

(3) THE DIVISION OF CA'NAAN AMONG THE TRIBES, chapters 13-22.

Israel held the central mountain backbone of Ca'naan with

the side valleys and slopes, but all the plain on the western border and the regions to the north remained in the hands of the Philistines, and other strong foes. Joshua is now old and, to avoid civil dissensions after his death, Jeho'vah bids him fix the borders of the Twelve Tribes, including in them the territory yet to be won and possessed (13:1-7). What tribes have we already seen assigned to the grazing lands east of the Jordan? (13:8-32.) Who had already received the promise of his? (14:6-14.) The clause to emphasize in his eloquent and touching words we will find given in v. 9 and repeated in v. 14—a statement to mark in the Bible and make the motto of one's life.

The chapters that follow, 15-19, with their lists of tribal border towns, are not intended for devotional reading, but they are of great value to students of Biblical geography and archaeology in enabling them to locate sites. Chapters 20 and 21 give the six cities of refuge, and the forty-eight cities assigned to the Levites throughout the territories of the Twelve Tribes.

(4) THE CLOSING SCENES IN JOSHUA'S CAREER, chapters 22-24.

Misunderstanding about the purpose of the two and a half tribes in building a great altar on the east bank of the Jordan comes dangerously near to civil strife. It remains as an altar of *Witness* to the True God (chap. 22).

Joshua, finding the time of his departure near, in a touching final address to the leaders of the nation, exhorts them to "cleave unto the Lord" and to "take good heed" that they love Him (chap. 23). Then, at She'chem, he declares, as spokesman for Jeho'vah, His dealings with the people, from Abraham down to the possession of Ca'naan (24:1-13), and dramatically appeals to them whether they will choose as their Lord and Leader Jeho'vah, or the false gods Abraham deserted, or the equally false ones whose followers they had overthrown in Ca'naan (vs. 14, 15). When they declare for Jeho'vah, he warns them how hard it is to faithfully serve a holy God (vs. 16-24). Thus prepared, he binds them in solemn covenant to serve Jeho'vah after his death (vs. 25-28).

His great life-work done, at 110 years he passes on to join

his own great leader, Moses. Verse 31 is a striking testimonial to his influence.

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON DEUTERONOMY AND JOSHUA

1. What does the title "Deuteronomy" mean, and how does it fit the book? Why do we have here a second recording of the Ten Commandments and other laws, as well as of many events already described?

2. What provision did Moses direct, and Joshua carry out, for preserving the Law from one generation to another?

3. How did Moses before his death prepare the people, and especially Joshua, to "carry on" after he was gone?

4. Why did he teach the nation a song? Give what you consider some of its finest passages.

5. Into what two main parts does the book of Joshua naturally divide? Give in a sentence for each the most important things it contains.

6. How was Joshua trained for his great responsibilities before undertaking them? What special commission and exhortation did he receive from Jeho'vah after Moses' death?

7. Contrast the campaigns against Jericho and against A'i. What lessons were the people to learn from each?

8. In what part of the land was the tribe of Judah given its inheritance? the tribe of E'phraim? Manas'seh? Benjamin?

9. Compare the final words and deeds of Moses with those of Joshua. How did their burials differ?

10. How would you sum up Moses' great service for the nation? How Joshua's?

FIRST GENERAL REVIEW

COVERING CHAPTERS ONE TO FIVE

1. Name three titles referring to the Bible, which we find used in its own pages; for each of these give one passage in which it occurs, and tell what that particular title emphasizes regarding the Bible.

2. What are the names of the first six Old Testament books? Tell enough about the contents of each to show how the name fits the book.

3. What are the two main divisions of Genesis? Mention the most important "beginnings" found in its opening chapters. Under what different tests does man at first fail? What new opportunities are offered him, and what promises made to him?

4. What do you think makes Abraham so great a figure in the world's history? What experience in his life occurred at Ur? in Egypt? under the oaks of Mam're? on Mount Mori'ah?

5. What do you consider the greatest scene in Joseph's picturesque career? Why do you select it?

6. How does Moses' career fit the meaning of his name? What three periods of about equal length make up his great life, and what do you consider the *outstanding* event or experience in each of these three periods? Why?

7. How were redemption and atonement taught in (1) the deliverance from Egypt; (2) the worship at the Tabernacle; (3) any of the wilderness experiences?

8. Describe, in a sentence or two for each, what occurred (1) at the Red Sea; (2) at Mount Si'nai; (3) at Ka'desh-barne'a; (4) on the Plains of Mo'ab; (5) at the ford of Jordan; (6) at Jericho; (7) at A'i; (8) at She'chem.

9. Describe the death of Moses and tell why he was not permitted to enter the Promised Land. Who succeeded him? how was the new leader fitted for his task? how appointed to it? how encouraged to press forward in it?

10. Mention some of the finest poetic portions found in these first six books; then quote five of what you consider the finest passages these books contain.

CHAPTER SIX

THE EARLY LIFE IN CANAAN

JUDGES AND RUTH

1. THEIR TITLES

THE names of these two books explain themselves, except that the judges whose stories are told in the book of that name were more than we mean by that word. They were deliverers, especially raised up in times of national emergency, who did their work and then retired again to private life. They came from different tribes. After Jeph'thah they appear to have ruled for life, and with Eli and Samuel the office began to pass from father to son.

2. KINDS OF LITERATURE

Narrative, except chapter 5, which is fine *lyric poetry*. In the story of Samson several riddles in verse appear. Ruth's reply to Nao'mi, chapter 1:16, 17, is in metrical form, as are the words of the men in Judges 4:11, 12 and of the women in vs. 14, 15.

Dean Stanley says:

"For lovely touches of ancient manners, for the succession of romantic incidents, for the consciousness that we are living face to face with the persons described, there is nothing like the history of the Judges, from Oth'niel to Eli."

3. OUTLINES

JUDGES

	CHAPTERS
1. Introduction	1:1-3:6
General Description of the Period.	
2. Stories of the Judges.....	3:7-16:31
(1) Oth'niel, Brother of Ca'leb.....	3:7-11
(2) E'hud, the Left-handed Benjamite....	3:12-30
(Sham'gar of the Ox Goad).....	3:31

	CHAPTERS
(3) Deb'orah and Ba'rak.....	4, 5
(4) Gid'eon of Manas'seh.....	6-8
(5) Abim'elech, the Bramble King.....	9
(To'la and Ja'ir).....	10:1-5
(6) Jeph'thah, the Gil'eadite.....	10:6-12:7
(Ib'zan, E'lon, and Ab'don).....	12:8-15
(7) Samson, the Weak Giant.....	13-16
3. An Appendix. Two Earlier Stories.....	17-21
(1) Mi'cah, His Gods and His Household Priest; and the Outpost of Dan.....	17, 18
(2) The Levite and His Concubine, and "the Deed of Shame." The Judgment upon Benjamin, and Its Healing.....	19-21

RUTH

	CHAPTERS
Famine, Exile, Return.....	1
The Grain Field.....	2
The Threshing Floor.....	3
The Wedding and the Life-line.....	4

4. THE GEOGRAPHY

To understand the book of Judges one must know the location of the various tribes and of their surrounding foes. The book must therefore be read with a map at hand, to which reference can be made as needed. The "city of palm trees" mentioned in chapter 3:13 is Jericho. Gil'gal, chapter 3:19, as we have already seen at the time of Joshua's entrance, was near by. Mo'ab, the oppressor in E'hud's time, lay across the Jordan.

With Deb'orah and Ba'rak the scene shifts to the middle of the land. Deb'orah prophesies near Beth'el, which was not far from A'i. Ba'rak gathers his army on Mount Tabor, in the northeastern portion of the great central Plain of Jez'reel. The river Ki'shon flows northwest through this plain, at the foot of Car'mel.

The Midianites dwelt in the desert, to the east. They swept into the fertile plain of Jez'reel. Oph'rah, Gideon's

town, lay in Manas'seh, in the lower part of the plain. The Spring of Ha'rod, from which flowed the stream at which the three hundred stood the test, is there to this day, a great water source, with the hill of Mo'reh near by. The Midianite camp lay beneath in the valley. The ford of Bethba'rah, at which the princes of Midian were caught when fleeing, lies on the Jordan just south of the Sea of Galilee.

Gideon's son, Abim'elech, makes his ambitious stand at She'chem, which we have already located between Mount E'bal and Mount Ger'izim. The'bez, where he met his death, was near by.

Jeph'thah belonged to Gil'ead, east of the Jordan, and north of the Am'monites, whom he conquered. There are several Miz'pehs, which is natural, since the word means "watch tower." All were on sightly locations. His home was in Miz'peh of Gil'ead (II:29).

With Samson the scene changes to the southwestern slopes and valleys that run down to the Philis'tine plain. There lay the territory of Dan, to which tribe he belonged. Samson is always "going down" from his hillside home to Tim'nah, and later to Ga'za, Philis'tine cities on the plain.

Mic'ah lived in the hill country of E'phraim, north of Judah. The Danites passed him and went to the far north where they burned La'ish and built on its site the city of Dan, northernmost outpost, from which we get the familiar phrase, "from Dan to Be'er-she'ba."

The Levite of the last story of the book took his concubine out of Bethlehem in Judah, traveled north by Je'bus (Jerusalem) (19:10) to Gib'eah of Benjamin (19:16), only a short distance farther north. There the rest of the tribes fought with Benjamin, after seeking the Lord's favor at Beth'el, only a short distance eastward. The bloody work went on at Ja'besh in Gil'ead, east of Jordan. Four hundred captured maidens from Ja'besh, and others from Shi'loh, dancing at the fountain of Libo'nah near it, became wives of the remnant of Benjamin, that the tribe might not become extinct.

The scenes of the story of Ruth occur at Bethlehem, and in the land of Mo'ab east of the Dead Sea, which can be clearly seen from the Bethlehem hill slopes.

5. THE CHRONOLOGY

The account of Joshua's death, which we have already read at the end of the book of Joshua, is repeated in chapter 2:6-10. If the periods of oppression (see chap. 3:8, 14, etc.) and the periods when "the land had rest" (see chap. 3:11, 30, etc.) are added up, we get a total of about 400 years; but 1 Kings 6:1 gives a total of only 480 years from the coming out of Egypt to the fourth year of Solomon's reign, and Paul, in Acts 13:20, gives a period of 450 years from Joshua's conquest to Samuel, the prophet. Moreover, the round numbers given for the periods of oppression and of rest, four forties, two twenties, and one eighty, may be general rather than exact. The fact probably is that some of the periods overlap; that is, that one judge was ruling in one section while another was ruling elsewhere.

The stories of chapters 17 to 21 evidently refer to the *earlier* period, sketched in general lines in the book's opening chapters, for the grandson of Moses is mentioned as living, in chap. 18:30 (R. V.), and the grandson of Aaron, in chap. 20:28.

The book of Ruth covers a period of some ten years, and may be located in Eli's time.

6. THE GENERAL SITUATION

The writer or collator of these stories evidently lived during the period of the kingdom that follows, as we may conclude from his phrase that in the times he describes "there was no king in Israel." The life of the nation was unorganized. No great leader appeared to succeed Joshua as he succeeded Moses. "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes." There was an altar at Beth'el and another at Shi'loh.

The period is much like that in our own history which followed the Revolutionary War, when we were a group of freed colonies, but not yet a united nation. The two great products of the era of the Judges were the United Kingdom of all Israel, and the worship of Jeho'vah alone as the one true and living God. National unity was inseparably connected with loyalty to the one true God, under whose direction Moses had led them out of bondage, and Joshua into possession of the Promised Land. Hence the writer of the book expressly says of each deliverer-judge that Jeho'vah raised him up as a

Saviour (see chap. 3:9, and similar passages), and that each deliverance followed a period of oppression by foes, which Jeho'vah permitted, because of their lapsing into idolatry and its accompanying sins (6:1).

The will of God was sought directly (1:1), no doubt by the method described in Numbers 27:21. At Bo'chim the angel (messenger) of Jeho'vah declared the penalty for failure to completely drive out the enemy from the portions of the land allotted to the Twelve Tribes (2:1-5), and the name ("weeping") memorializes the spirit in which the message was received. They wept and worshiped, but they did not correct the evil; and so, they once and again fell into sin, and bore its penalty (2:13-15). In the case of two of the deliverers—the call of Gideon, chapter 6:11, 14, and the preparation of Samson, chapter 13:3, 6, 8, 10, 11—we have a clear description of the appearance of a divine messenger in human form, similar to the appearance to Abraham in Genesis 18, and to later ones in New Testament times, as in Luke 1:11; 2:9; Acts 5:19; and other passages.

It is just what might be expected that, without such a perfect revelation of God's will and character as we now have in our full Bible, there should be *special* appearances and directions, as we have already seen with Abraham, Jacob, and Moses. Moreover, it is natural that these should come through one who has human form and speech, but heavenly source and message. These Old Testament theoph'anies ("God appearances," as they are fittingly called) were but forerunners of the Incarnation; that is, of the coming of God in the human life of Christ. Study carefully, therefore, all the messages in this book which are brought by the "angel of Jeho'vah."

7. THE JUDGES

Note regarding them all that (1) their leadership is local, usually centered at a single spot, and each limited chiefly to his own tribe; (2) that military qualities influenced their choice; (3) that their success depended upon their faithfully following divine guidance and leading.

They number thirteen in this book, with two others, Eli and Samuel, added to the list in the next. Six are little more than names; one brought upon his country war and distress, rather than victory and peace; two are only of secondary

importance; four are really great; and, therefore, have their careers given to us in detail.

Listing them in their order, and suggesting their importance typographically, they are: *Oth'niel*, of Judah, Ca'leb's nephew and son-in-law; *E'hud*, of Benjamin, the left-handed; Sham'gar, who single-handed slew Philis'tine oppressors with an ox goad; *Ba'rah*, of Naph'tali, and his great woman inspirer, DEB'ORAH; GID'EON, of Manas'seh; *Abim'elech*, his son, the bramble king; To'la, of Is'sachar; Ja'ir, the Gil'eadite; JEPH'THAH, also a Gil'eadite; Ib'zan, of Judah; E'lon, of Zeb'ulon; Ab'don, of E'phraim; and SAMSON, of Dan.

Let us study now the careers and characters of those whose lives stand out because of the deeds they wrought for God and country.

(1) *Oth'niel*. His name means "lion of God," and the little we know about him shows his courage. He won his wife by capturing a city (chap. 1:13), and for her dowry she brought what was a great treasure in that land, springs of water (1:14, 15). Later the Spirit of the Lord gave him victory over a mighty oppressor, the powerful king of Mesopotamia (3:7-11), when the people in their need "cried unto the Lord."

(2) *E'hud*. His "message from God" (3:20) was a death blow. How does this compare with God's messages to men now? He was a man of strategy, both in his access to the oppressing king of Mo'ab, and in leading the attack upon the Mo'abites at the fords of the Jordan, where they could be met man to man.

(3) *Ba'rah* and DEB'ORAH, chapters 4 and 5. Which of the two is the real leader? Compare the two accounts: one in prose narrative in the fourth chapter, the other the song of the victors in the fifth. Picture the scene: the gathering of the clans upon Mount Ta'bor; the long line of Sis'era's army stretched along the base of Car'mel by the river Ki'shon; the storm of lightning and rain; the charge from the mountaintop across the plain; the broken lines, and the flight of the foe.

Then seek to enter into the spirit of Deb'orah's Song, which Stalker calls "almost unequaled for warmth of feeling and splendor of imagery." Notice which tribes she praised, and why; and which she blamed, and why. What bearing has all this upon the Lord's campaigns today, and our part in them?

To whom do Deb'orah's words in chapter 4:9 really refer? Ja'el did, a brave deed, but it was a treacherous one, and the spirit of the triumph song in 5:24-31 is very far from that of the New Testament, by which we are to be guided.

(4) GIDEON, chapters 6 to 8. Who is the oppressor now? The figure of "locusts" in chapter 6:5 is truly descriptive of these tribes of the desert, who swept in at harvest time to consume all the fruits of industry.

How was the young farmer engaged when the Angel of Jeho'vah came to call him to action against the foe? Was it irony, or encouragement, when the visitor addressed him as a "mighty man of valor"? (6:12.) What one thing, and no other, could overbalance all the discouraging conditions? (6:12-16.) What *signs* were given to encourage Gideon's faith? The first showed him that the Lord was at peace with him (6:17-24; Jeho'vah-Sha'lom; that is, "Jeho'vah Is Peace").

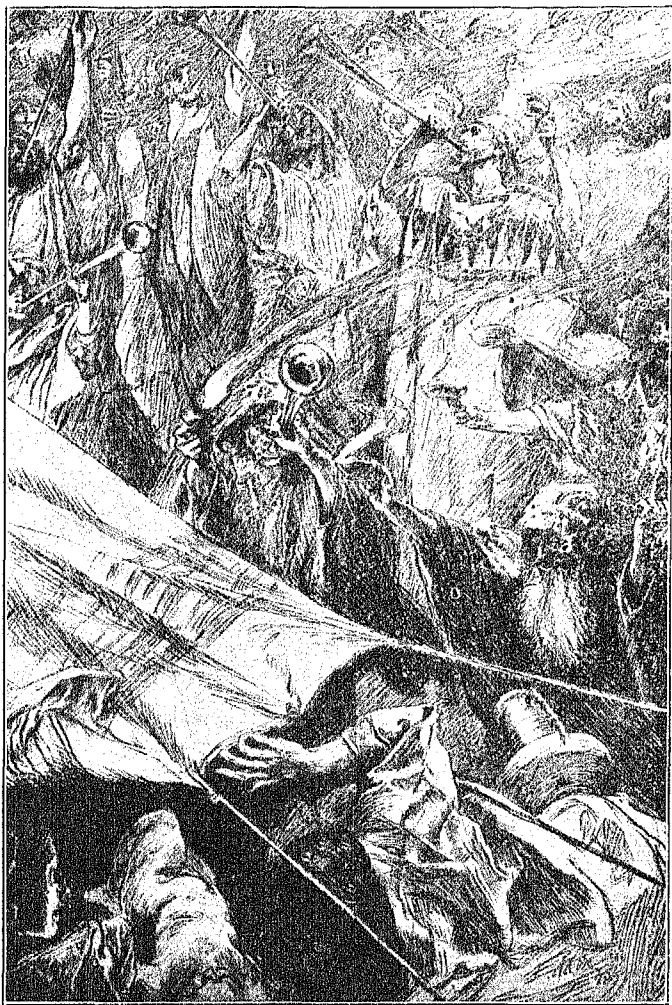
How did he show that he realized that religion began at home? (6:25-27.) How did his father show both sense and courage? How did Gideon's new name become a constant challenge to the idolatry he was opposing?

Thus committed to follow God's leadership, he calls first his own kin, then his own tribe, and then the neighboring ones. New *signs* encourage both him and them. A fleece of wool was appropriate to impress sheepraisers. Both signs were supernatural, *above* the ordinary course of nature; the second even more than the first, because the fleece would naturally take and hold whatever moisture was in the air. The lesson was that God could send His favor where He saw fit so to do.

The seventh chapter tells the familiar story of the sifting of the troops, and the rout of the foe. Tell how it was all done. How did every detail magnify God, and show Him as leader, and Gideon as His obedient captain? How was this brought out in the battle-cry of the night attack?

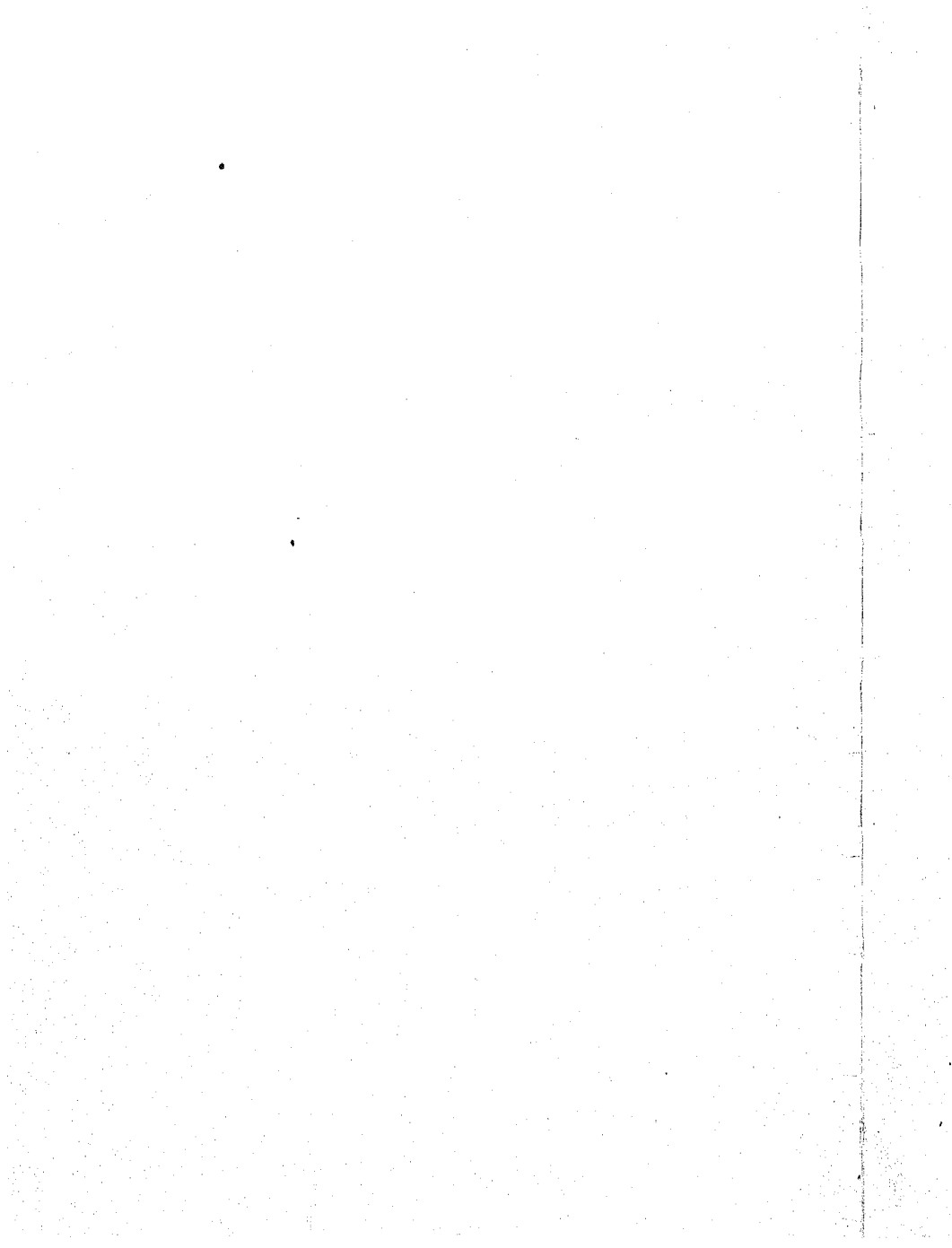
How did Gideon follow up the victory? How did he show wisdom in dealing with the men of E'phraim (8:1-3), and in meeting the proposal to make him the nation's ruler? (8:22, 23.) And yet what errors of his led to trouble? (8:24-32.) A man of his times, and not without blemish, in what respects is he a fine example?

(5) *Abim'elech*. How is the beginning of his career en-



Edwin A. Abbey

THE STRATAGEM OF GIDEON



tirely different from that of his father? How does he ever show himself a self-seeker, without devotion to God, or his fellow-men? Explain Jo'tham's fable. How was its judgment on Abim'elech and the men of She'chem fulfilled? What is the one great lesson from this ugly story?

(6) ЈЕРН'ТНАН, chapters 10 to 12. The scene shifts to Gil'ead, east of the Jordan. The Am'monites, who had blocked the path for Moses and the Children of Israel three centuries before, are now the oppressors. When once again the people seek in trouble the God they have forsaken in times of security, they meet with a heart-searching reply (10:10-16); but repentance leads to mercy. This time it is the *people*, through their leaders, who seek for a deliverer. Where do they find him, and what qualifications has he for the task?

How does he begin with words? How true are they? What deeds follow? What rash vow did he make, and what did it cost him? Probably he offered his only child in sacrifice, believing that he must do so (see Numbers 30:2), although we would gladly think that he took advantage of the merciful provision of Leviticus 27:1-6, and redeemed her with money. The times, however, were bloody ones. He shows the stern spirit of the Puritan, yet he was loyal to God as he knew Him; and the writer to the Hebrews includes him, with Gid'eon, Ba'rak, and Samson, in the list of heroes of faith (Heb. 11:32). The two significant verses about him are that he "spoke his words before the Lord" (11:11), and that "the Spirit of the Lord came upon him" (11:29) to give him might.

(7) SAMSON, chapters 13 to 16. Here is a story most of us have heard, at least in part, since childhood. Its impressive message is that any power given us by God—in Samson's case great physical strength—is a *trust* to be used for Him, and when selfishly and rashly used will only bring disaster. It shows, too, how physical passion, when allowed license, dethrones conscience, and starves the soul. Samson is a good-natured, easy-going, riddle-loving, self-indulgent giant, who at times does amazing deeds, and at the last dies tragically in destroying the foes of his country and his God.

Review first the story of his birth in chapter 13. Once again, as in the case of Isaac, and later in that of Samuel, a son is sent to a barren wife. How are his parents prepared

in order that they may raise him for God? What is the vow of the Naz'irite, or consecrated one? (See vs. 5, 7, 14; and see also Numbers 6.) How did the messenger impress his warning? How did the woman show her good sense? (v. 23.)

The story of Samson is a drama in five acts, all connected with his relations to three women.

(1) *His Philis'tine wife*; the slain lion; the wedding; the riddle; the slaughter of thirty Philis'tines; the three hundred jackals in the standing grain; the slaughter of the Philis'tines who had burned his wife and her father.

(2) *At the Rock E'tam*, near the border line between Judah and Philis'tia; his surrender to his own countrymen; the new ropes that burst like flax; slaughter of a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass; his prayer when athirst.

(3) *The Harlot of Ga'za*. The city gates carried off at midnight.

(4) *Delilah, of the Valley of So'rek*. The withes; the ropes; the woven locks; at last the shorn head and the vanished strength.

(5) *The Prison House at Ga'za*. The blind prisoner grinding out sport for his foes; once again he prays; the final disaster.

With this summary as a guide, retell his life story. Then from it learn some of its greater lessons:

(a) That life is no joke. Good humor is a fine trait, but Samson's fragic end came from his failure to look at life seriously, and to consecrate his powers.

(b) That training must be mental and spiritual, as well as physical. Samson's mind and soul dwarfed within his big body.

(c) That marriage should be "in the Lord," and that bodily purity and self-restraint are necessary to develop real manhood. "He that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city."

8. TWO ADDED STORIES, CHAPTERS 17 TO 21

These incidents are really an appendix to the book. They belong to the general period broadly sketched in chapters 2 and 3.

The first explains why Dan settled so far to the north. (Recall the familiar expression, "From Dan to Be'er-

she'ba.") Failing to fully conquer the territory assigned to it, this tribe sent out an expedition, captured La'ish, and changed its name to Dan. The story of Mi'cah (The same name is later borne by one of the prophets,) shows his superstition and shiftiness, and the unsettled condition both of worship and morals.

The second is a story of civil strife. It shows Benjamin's fighting qualities, which appear again later in Old Testament history. The ugly story of the Levite and his concubine recalls what we have already read of Lot in Sodom. It shows, however, a growing national unity. Deb'orah's song (chap. 5), shows the tribes beginning to act together against a common foe from *without*; here they act together to root out an evil from *within* (chap. 20), and to prevent the loss of one of the tribes from Israel (chap. 21). The verse, four times repeated—twice in part only—in these four chapters (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25), describes the times as without central government. The same was true as to religion. There were sacred places indeed—as Beth'el, where the Ark of the Covenant was (20:27, 28)—and an annual feast at Shi'loh (21:19), but we have no mention of regular sacrifices, or orderly worship. It was a "storm and stress" period, out of which national unity was to grow from fuller knowledge of God and better obedience to His revelation of His will.

9. THE LOVELY STORY OF RUTH

The rough life, the bloodshed, the moral evil, seen in some of these stories in Judges all make an impressive contrasted background for the beautiful picture of home life which we have in the book of Ruth. Its four chapters provide a link between Judges and Samuel. Its time was probably that of the Philistine oppression (Judges 13:1), which called forth Samson's exploits, and during which Eli served as priest at Shi'loh (1 Sam. 4:18). It ends with the birth of David's grandfather, which could not have been far removed in time from that of Samuel. There was evidently peace with Mo'ab, over east of the Dead Sea, hence it was the near and natural resort in the time of famine.

Read again, as you may often have done before, the beautiful pastoral story. The key verses, the finest expression of family devotion to be found in any language, are 1:16, 17.

They are more; they show Ruth's loyalty, not merely to her mother-in-law, but to her mother-in-law's God. Another fine passage, 2:12, points out the abundant reward of Ruth's loyalty.

Ruth's conduct, under Nao'mi's instruction, in the threshing-floor scene (chap. 3) must be judged in the light of the customs of her day, and thus judged is not out of harmony with the modesty she elsewhere shows. The joy in the birth of a son, which meant so much in preserving the family line, is finely pictured in 4:13-15. In this case it meant even more, for this family line was to be both that of David, and of the Messiah himself, the Son of David. Ruth is a fine illustration in anticipation of what Jesus mentioned in Matthew 8:13. She came "from the East."

Find in the story a good example of faith; of industry; of loyalty; of generosity; of affection.

10. GOD IN THESE BOOKS

What we have in Judges is *interpreted* history. The writer sees in invasions and oppressions the judgment of God upon idolatry and its attendant immoralities. Deliverances come when the people "cry unto God" and He raises up "saviours." Strong characters move before us, and much that they do is not in accord with the way of life Jesus later taught and illustrated. The moral values are to be seen in the way in which God is shown as the overruling hand in all the history, "keeping watch above His own," and ever making evil bring its own sure penalty.

In Ruth we see the fine virtues of a godly and loyal home life and the blessings they bring.

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON JUDGES AND RUTH

1. What other title might, quite as well as that of judge, describe the men who are prominent in the book of Judges? Give two or three facts to support your answer.
2. Mention four of the leading judges, and tell at least one important fact about each.
3. (1) Which judge came from Manas'seh and broke down the altar of Ba'al? (2) Which had a woman back of him to give him courage? (3) Which two did their work east of the

Jordan, and what did each of these do? (4) Which fought the Philis'tines? Mention three of his striking exploits.

4. Describe the two appearances of the Angel of Jeho'vah, and tell (1) how He aroused and strengthened the faith of the young farmer, and (2) how He prepared the parents for their Naz'irite son.

5. Tell some of the facts that show the state of morals and religion during this period.

6. Compare the period with any part of our American history. Give a few points showing resemblance, and a few showing difference.

7. What reason had the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews for including each of the following in the list of heroes of faith: (1) Gid'eon? (2) Ba'rak? (3) Jeph'thah? (4) Samson?

8. What fine qualities do you see in Deb'orah? in Bo'az? in Nao'mi? in Ruth?

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE UNITED KINGDOM I

FIRST SAMUEL

SAMUEL; SAUL; DAVID: SHEPHERD, SOLDIER,
AND OUTLAW

1. THE TITLE

THIS and the following book take their names from Samuel, who closes the line of the judges, heads the line of the prophets, and is God's representative in establishing the kingdom, by anointing first Saul and then David. The two books, at first one, were divided in the Septuagint translation. Samuel's *influence* is in them both, though his life ends in 1 Samuel, chapter 25.

2. THE KIND OF LITERATURE

The book is one of picturesque and vivid prose narrative. Its interesting stories, full of incident and adventure, are evidently told by one who knows the scenes he describes, and who probably lived not long after the events (chap. 5:5; 6:18). He constantly suggests the religious applications of the facts, and shows the hand of God in them (*e.g.*, 1:19; 3:19, etc.). Hannah's song (chap. 2) is poetry, and has much in common with the *Magnificat* of Mary, in Luke 1:46-55.

3. THE OUTLINE

Chapter 1, Samuel Enters; 9, Saul Enters; 16, David Enters; 25, Samuel Passes On; 31, Saul Passes On.

4. THE GEOGRAPHY

The scenes of the book are chiefly laid in the southern part of the land, in the territory assigned to Benjamin and Judah. Samuel's life centers at Ra'mah, probably the present Ramallah, about twelve miles north of Jerusalem. Shi'loh, where

the Ark was, lies somewhat farther to the northeast. Miz'pah (watchtower) is northeast of Jerusalem, but nearer³ to it. It is located on the central ridge, with outlook to the Philis'tine country to the southwest bordering the Great (Mediterranean) Sea, and to the Jordan Valley and Dead Sea to the east, with Am'mon, Mo'ab, and E'dom lying beyond. Gil'gal is in the Jordan Valley near Jericho.

Beth-she'meth and Kir'jath-je'arim, connected with the carrying away and return of the Ark, lie in the mountain defiles that lead down to the Philis'tine lowlands. Ebene'zer is there, too, and the Valley of E'lah, where David won his spurs by killing the giant. Ek'ron and Gath are two of the Philis'tine cities, near the southwestern coast line.

Gib'eah and Mich'mash, closely associated with Saul and Jon'athan, are not far from Jerusalem, to the northeast; Bethlehem, David's home, is some six miles to the south of Jerusalem.

Saul's circuit in search of his father's asses was through the hill country of E'phraim to the north of his home city of Gib'eah, and then back through Benjamin's territory to Samuel's city of Ra'mah. During Saul's reign his home city of Gib'eah seems to have been his headquarters. There was no national capital until David's reign.

When David became a fugitive, he went first to Nai'oth at Ra'mah, believed to be the term applied to the buildings occupied by the prophets there, and then to Nob near Jerusalem, which had become a home of the priests, and central place of worship since the Philis'tines captured the Ark and destroyed Shi'loh. (See chap. 4:22, and Jeremiah 7:12-14.) Adul'lam, which became the headquarters for David and his band, was in the mountainous region to the southwest, quite near to the scene of his victory over Goliath.

Other points connected with his life as fugitive from Saul's jealous rage are in this same bare region of limestone rock to the south, which sloped down toward the desert. Kei'lah, which he saved from the Philis'tines, is just south of Adul'lam. Enge'di, where he spared Saul in the cave, is on the far eastern edge, overlooking the Dead Sea. Ziph, where he spared Saul a second time, this time in the open, is nearer the center of this wild tangle of hills and gorges.

Zik'lag, assigned by A'chish, king of Gath, to David and his followers for residence, is far to the southwest. Gilbo'a, on the other hand, where Saul's career ended, is to the north, in the great plain of Jez'reel, where we have already seen Gid'eon winning his victory over the invading Mid'ianites. Beth-shan', where the Philis'tines exposed the beheaded body of Saul, holds the strong strategic location at the southeastern end of the valley. Important excavations recently made there have unearthed on its mound one city layer after another, away back to Saul's time, and earlier.

Jerusalem has been mentioned in this section merely for convenience in locating other spots. We must remember that it was still a stronghold of the Jeb'usites, early inhabitants of Ca'naan, and did not become an Israelitish city until David captured it during his reign.

As you read the book, perhaps once and again, refer to this section and to a good map of Southern Ca'naan, or of Ca'naan as divided among the Twelve Tribes. The whole story will gain in reality and clearness as you place the events in their true geographical setting.

5. THE CHRONOLOGY

We cannot fix dates with certainty, but we have some statements to guide us. Eli was 98 years old at his death (chap. 4:15). By that time Samuel had grown up, and was accepted by the nation as a prophet (3:19-4:1). The period of Philis'tine oppression following the capture and return of the Ark lasted twenty years (7:2). Samuel's judgeship then began and lasted until, in his old age (8:1), he appointed his sons; and, after their failure, anointed Saul. Saul's rule, we learn in Acts 13:21, lasted forty years, which may include the seven and a half years when David was king over Judah only, and Saul's line was represented by Ishbosh'eth and Abner. 1 Samuel 13:1 would aid us, but unfortunately the text in the oldest Hebrew copies we possess is incomplete. The Revised Version adds the missing figure conjecturally, by making Saul *forty* years old when he began to reign. Jon'athan at any rate was then a young man grown.

With David's coronation we get a well-fixed date to calculate from (2 Sam. 5:4, 5). We may fix 1062 B.C. as the time he was made king over Judah, and 1055 over all Israel. His

anointing by Samuel took place about 1077, Saul's anointing about twenty-five years earlier. Saul died 1063 B.C., Samuel a year or two earlier (1 Sam. 25:1), about 1065. He had reached the age, as we reckon it, of 106 years. That puts his birth, the opening date in our book, at 1171 B.C. He was, we may conclude, about twelve at the time of his first message from God (chap. 3); about thirty at Eli's death; about fifty when his judgeship began; about seventy when he anointed Saul; and about ninety-five when he anointed David.

6. SAMUEL: PROPHET AND JUDGE

In Samuel we have a man of God who brings God's word to the people, and pleads the people's case before God.

Both in character and in work he marks a great advance over the earlier judges. They were, first and foremost, military leaders; Samuel did, indeed, win victory for Israel over the oppressing foe, but we never see a warlike weapon in his hands until he takes the sword to execute Agag (chap. 15:33).

They were called from their daily tasks to rally and lead the people, and when the emergency passed, returned to their homes, from which they exercised a certain national leadership. He was consecrated to God even before his birth (1:27, 28), and, though an Ephraimite (1:1) and, therefore, not of the priestly line, made his home at the Tabernacle and offered and blessed sacrifices (7:9; 9:13; 16:5).

To his work as judge, in performing which he made annual circuits (7:15-17), he added that of national religious leader. He is the first to become public intercessor for the people unto God (7:5; 8:6; 12:17-19).

And when the people turn from his spiritual leadership, stimulated to their course by the unworthy administration of justice by his sons, to ask of God a military leader in the form of a king, it is he who pours the anointing oil upon the head first of Saul and then of David.

To properly estimate his career, consider:

(1) *His Birth and Boyhood*, chapters 1-3.

How much did he owe to his mother? to his father? What are the facts that explain his name (Samuel means "asked of God")? How did polygamy work in Elkanah's home? The Old Testament does not expressly condemn polygamy, but

faithfully represents its fruits as unhappy and harmful. How was this true in Jacob's case? and above all in Solomon's?

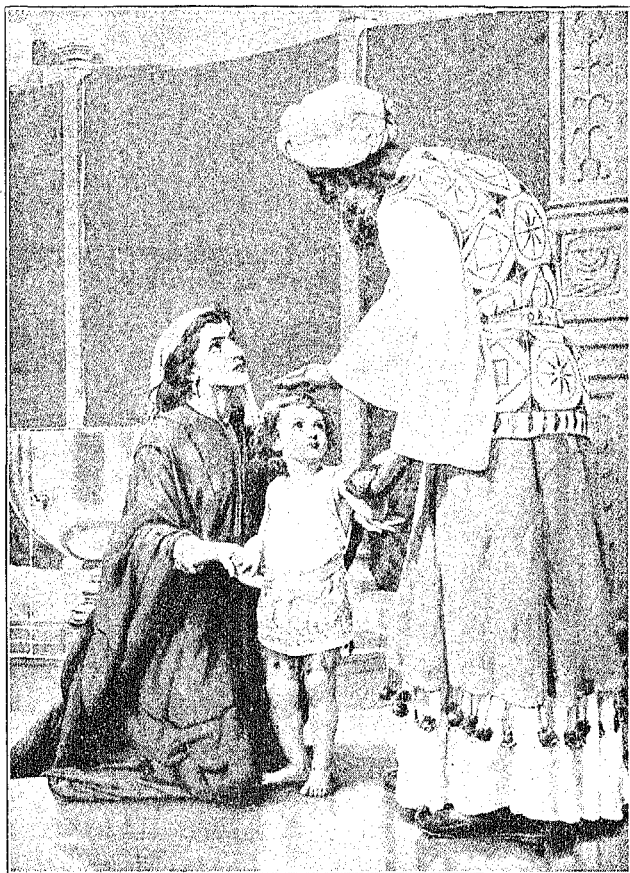
See how clearly you can tell the familiar story of God's first direct dealings with Samuel. What effect would this experience have upon him? What searching message was given him to deliver to Eli? What does the conduct of Eli's sons indicate as to the state of morals and religion while Samuel was growing up? What bearing may this have had upon the sternness which we later see appearing in his dealings with the nation, and with Saul?

(2) *His Appearance As National Leader*, chapters 4-7.

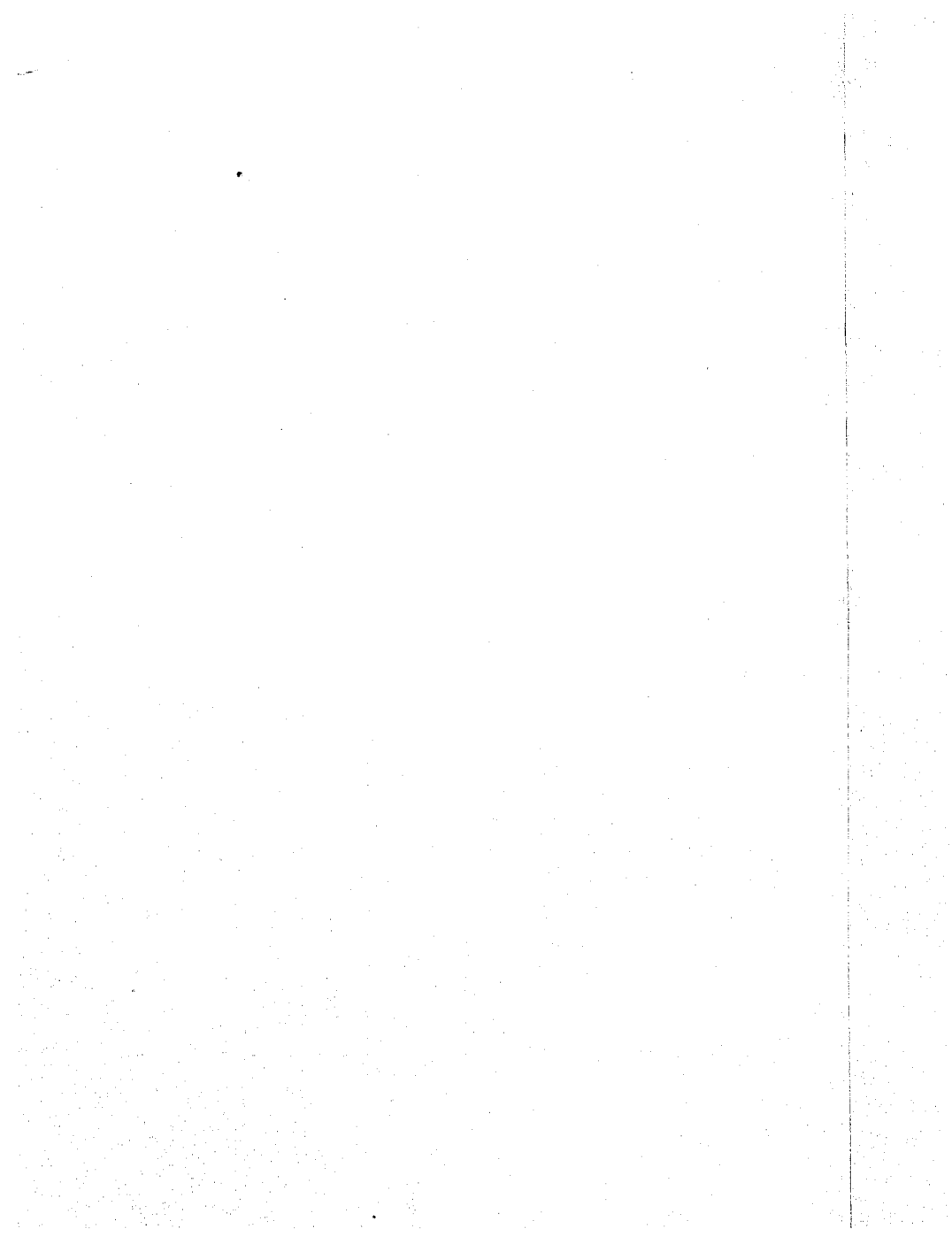
In Samuel we have the true Naz'irite (chap 1:11. See also Numbers 6:1-5, and compare Judges 13:5). In him the true spirit of the vow was kept, and his separation meant more than mere physical strength as in Samson's case. In the absence of a faithful priest (2:35) he, although of E'phraim (1:1) and not of Levi, performed priestly functions when the occasion demanded (7:9, etc.). In this he anticipated our great High Priest, who was of Judah's line, but whose priesthood was not a matter of tribal or family descent (Heb. 7:13-17), but of divine authority and power.

Eli's weakness, and his sons' vileness point to a national condition of godlessness leading to the disaster described in chapter 4. Superstitious reverence for the symbol led to the loss of the Ark, but God manifested Himself even when His people failed (chaps. 5 and 6). The bubonic plague is still a scourge at times around the eastern Mediterranean. The mice and emerods (hemorrhoids), or tumors, indicated the method of its spread and the form of its manifestation. An error has probably in copying crept into the text of 6:19. Even seventy men would have been a large number of deaths in a village like Beth-she'mesh.

Twenty years of Philistine oppression followed (7:2). These are silent years so far as our record of Samuel goes. They may be compared to the silent years of Jesus at Nazareth (Luke 2:52). Samuel was biding his time and preparing for his life-work. The statements of chapter 3:19-21 seem to fit here, while 4:1 paves the way for the great scene at Miz'pah described in chapter 7, and the sweeping victory that followed it. Study Samuel here as a man of prayer.



Francis W. W. Topham
THE DEDICATION OF SAMUEL



(3) *His Work As Judge*, chapter 7:13-17.

These five verses cover the period of Samuel's mature life. The statements of vs. 13 and 15 are to be taken *generally*. Verse 13 can only mean during the years of his judgeship, for in Saul's time, while Samuel is still living, we face Philistine oppression again. Verse 15 must be understood in the light of 8:1.

Samuel, like the earlier judges, wrought deliverance, though in his case by leading the nation to penitence and securing for them God's help. Then over a delivered people he administered justice. The Miz'pah in v. 16 is probably the same as that of 7:5, which was a central spot for Southern Ca'naan, from which Beth'el would be a northerly circuit, and Gil'gal an easterly one.

(4) *His Relations to Saul and David*, chapter 8 and following.

Strange indeed that Samuel should see repeated in his own family the same sad situation that as a boy he had seen in Eli's. He is not blamed, as Eli was, for his sons going wrong. Yet surely he must have known their characters before he anointed them to judge Israel. Perhaps the trait of sternness hindered his being a good father. He surely was not a weak one like Eli.

At any rate, the sins of his sons led to, or at least gave opportunity for, the expression of the national desire for a king. Kingly rule, he told them, would call for its price (8:10-18). It would fix the eyes of the people upon the king rather than upon God as leader. However, God bids him choose and anoint Saul (chap. 9); and then, when Saul fails, David (chap. 16). Each of them in turn is loved by the old servant of God. When Saul fails, Samuel cries unto God all night (15:11. See also 16:1). He does not live to see David on the throne. But he protects him (19:19-24) when Saul would slay him. He passes to his reward (25:1) while one of the leaders anointed by him at God's command is seeking to destroy the other.

A great spiritual leader in troublous times, he stands out as one who from childhood had direct messages from God and delivered them both to nation and individual without fear or favor.

7. SAUL, THE FIRST KING

The man who began well, but brought ruin to himself, and disaster to his nation by disobedience and self-will. His story begins with his anointing, in chapter 9, and ends with his beheading, in chapter 31. Use the outline that follows, and trace his career from step to step.

(1) *The Young Farmer* seeks his father's asses, and finds a call to lead the nation, chapter 9:1-10:16.

(2) *The Prophet Guides the Choice*, and the people accept the tall and goodly young man as their king, 10:17-27. What traits of character that appear in chapters 9 and 10 augur favorably for his success?

(3) *His First Military Victories*, chapter 11. From the farm-field to the battle-field. Again what qualities are evident?

(4) *The First Wrong Step*, chapter 13. Why was it wrong? How did it indicate unfitness for his task?

(5) *Jon'athan's Brave Deed*, chapter 14. What does the chapter show of Jon'athan's character, and what further of Saul's?

(6) *The Summary of Saul's Exploits*, and the names of his family, chapter 14:47-52.

(7) *Saul's Second and Greater Wrongdoing*, chapter 15. Am'alek had been Israel's foe from Moses' day (Exod. 17:8-15, and Num. 24:20). Moses, indeed, had charged the nation to destroy Am'alek (Deut. 25:17-19), and Samuel passed the duty on to Saul (15:1-3). With him it was no question of the righteousness of the deed, as it would be with us now. He did not hesitate to shed blood; he merely chose his own way instead of the way marked out for him. He was not the first, nor has he been the last to practice the adage, "To the victor belong the spoils." Why was the prophet so severe in his rebuke? How thorough was Saul's repentance?

(8) *His Downward Course*, 15:35; 16:14-16, 23. He becomes moody and morose (16:14-23); is jealous of David when the latter wins his spurs by killing Goliath (18:7-9); tries to kill him with his own hand (10-15); then, by subtlety, through the Philistines (17-29); and, failing these attempts, through his son and servants (19:1); finally, losing all shame, attempts to kill him while he plays for him; and later to seize him in his own house (9-17).

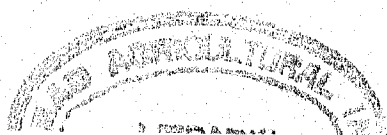
(9) *His Senseless Pursuit of David* continuing, he destroys the priests of Nob who had befriended David (22:6-19); seeks in vain to trap David and his men in Kei'lah (23:7-14); pursues him in "the Wilderness of Ziph in the wood," the "hill of Hach'ilah," and the "strongholds of Enge'di" (23:15-29, and 24:1-22). Flashes of his better nature appear: with the band of the prophets in Ra'mah (19:18-24); at Enge'di, when David saves his life and then puts their mutual case in plain and appealing words (24:8-22); and again at Ziph, after David has taken his weapons from his side as he sleeps (26:13-25).

(10) *The Last Scenes in the Tragedy.* The Philistines again attack, and the Israelites are driven far to the north and east before their foe. Saul resorts to the necromancer at En'dor (28:3-25), and hears his doom from the spirit of the prophet, who had said so many searching words to him in vain. On Gilbo'a (31:1-13) he follows defeat by suicide. The only gleam of light on that last dark hour is the courageous and grateful deed of the men of Ja'besh-gil'ead, whom Saul had delivered from their oppressor in the brighter day at the beginning of his career (11:1-11).

Looking back over that career we see in Saul one who had qualifications for leadership, but who lost his opportunity for lack of spiritual vision, and by disobedience to the messages of God through His prophet. Preëminent physically, a good fighter, especially at the first and the last, he lacked the gift of winning and keeping true and loyal followers. This was because he thought more of himself than of the nation, or even of his own son. Jealousy was his besetting sin; and disappointments made him gloomy and morose. His reign, beginning in bright promise, ended in disaster for himself, his family, his followers, and his nation.

8. JON'ATHAN: ROYAL PRINCE AND LOYAL FRIEND

Jon'athan is one of the most attractive of all Old Testament characters; and the friendship of David and Jon'athan is as outstanding in Bible history as that of Damon and Pyth'ias in Greek literature. The young prince is first introduced to us in chapter 13:3, when he strikes the first blow for freedom. His exploit at Mich'mash (14:1-15) was as well planned as it was brave. It made him the people's hero, and saved him



from the death which his father would have inflicted in carrying out his own foolish adjuration (24:45). What they said of him in v. 45 was true.

Even Jon'athan failed to meet the challenge of Goliath, but David's victory over the giant won for the young shepherd lad the undying admiration and devotion of the young prince (18:1). The covenant they made that day (18:3, 4) was faithfully kept by both. His friendly intercession for David at first touched his father's heart (19:1-7). When Saul's jealous hatred broke out again Jon'athan stood by his friend, and chapter 20 is the finest description in all literature of a friendship that knew no bounds of loyal devotion.

Later the prince sought the fugitive and "strengthened his hand in God" (23:15-18). But his father was king, and he was a loyal son as well as a faithful friend. So he followed the lost cause, and died a brave man's death, in a disaster for which he was in no way responsible (31:1, 2). In all this friendship David was chief recipient and Jon'athan chief giver. For David it was left to immortalize his friend in the memorial ode we shall find in 2 Samuel, and later to show kindness to Jon'athan's son.

9. DAVID: SHEPHERD, SOLDIER, AND OUTLAW

David was the youngest son of Jesse, a farmer of Bethlehem in Judah, who was himself the grandson of Bo'az and Ruth. In chapters 16-31, we have, mingled with the stories of Samuel and Saul and Jon'athan, the story of David's career from his anointing up to Saul's death. We have no fixed date until in 2 Samuel 5:4 we find that he was thirty at the time of his coronation over Judah at He'bron. Reckoning back, we conclude that he was probably about sixteen when Samuel anointed him, old enough to care for a flock of sheep, but not to be called with his brothers to the family sacrifice (16:5, 11). Probably he was several years older when he was summoned to Saul's court with a reputation both as musician and as warrior (16:18). We may think of him as about twenty when he faced Goliath, twenty-two when he married Mi'chal, and twenty-five when he was driven out of Saul's court. That will leave five years for the period during which Saul's hatred made him a fugitive, with his life in constant jeopardy. Sixteen months of this period he spent in the Philis'tine coun-

try, 1 Sam. 27:7. While the term "outlaw" is usually applied to David during these years, he was no outlaw in the sense of defying or opposing law or justice. It was bitter *injustice* that drove him from society during this period.

Recall the outstanding events of this period of his career, using the following outline as a guide:

(1) *He Is Anointed by Samuel*, chapter 16:1-13.

What made him so attractive? What came to him with the old prophet's guided choice and the anointing oil? Did it make any change for the time being in his outward circumstances?

(2) *Is Made Armor-Bearer and Harpist to the King*, chapter 16:14-23.

How was this a place of opportunity? and yet of danger?

(3) *Becomes the Nation's Hero by Killing Goliath*, chapter 17:1-54.

How before winning victory over the foe did he show he could rule his own spirit? How much did practice have to do with his success and how much did faith in God?

(4) *Becomes the Object of Saul's Bitter Jealousy*.

We may see four stages in Saul's hatred and in his attempts on David's life:

a. After the song of the women put David's prowess above the king's, Saul, in his own house, attempts David's life; and, that failing, transfers him to a post of danger (18:6-13).

b. Then he makes him his son-in-law, fixing a dowry which he thinks will surely result in his death (18:14-27). (The foreskin was then the token of a slain enemy, just as the scalp was the token in the later days of American Indian warfare.)

c. Then he vainly seeks to stir up Jon'athan, and some of his servants, to assassinate David (19:1-7).

d. Finally he makes another direct attempt with his own hand; and, that failing, sends a posse to seize him in his own house (19:8-17).

These various attempts, though related, were no doubt spread over a period of months, and perhaps of two or three years.

(5) *Lives Like a Hind on the Mountains*

while Saul relentlessly pursues him to take his life. The folly and sin of it are all the more evident when we realize that during this period their constant foes, the Philistines, were making one attack after another (23:1, 27) and gathering strength for a great invasion (31:1-3). Yet here was the king, not only attempting to kill his best military leader, but continually fomenting civil strife and bitterness. So selfishness blinds one both to what is right and what is wise.

The events of this period in David's life are somewhat difficult to keep in mind. It will help if you connect some one incident with each of the following places:

a. Nai'oth in Ra'mah, the home of the prophets, chapter 19:18-24. What did Saul find harder to fight than armed foes?

b. Nob, the headquarters of the priests, chapter 21:1-9. What did David get here? How did our Lord later make use of this incident? (Matt. 12:3, 4.) To what infamy did Saul's bitter spirit lead him at Nob?

c. Adul'lam, the cave of the discontented (22:1, 2). Kei'lah, the rescued but ungrateful city (23:1-13). Each in turn headquarters for David's bodyguards. How were these followers of his recruited, and how fed?

d. The Wilderness, where Saul pursued him. The hill of Hach'ilah in the Wilderness of Ziph and Ma'on. (See title to Psalm 54.) How did David and his men escape this time?

e. Enge'di and Ziph. Twice David spared Saul's life when it was in his hand—once in the cave, and again in the night camp (24:1-22, and 26:1-25). What effect did David's magnanimity have upon Saul? Why did it not last?

f. Car'mel in Ma'on, chapter 25. What opinion do we form of Na'bal in this chapter? of Ab'igail? of David?

g. In the land of the Philistines. Early in his career as a fugitive, David had weakened and fled for refuge to the Philistine city of Gath (21:10-15). It is a pitiful enough picture to see him playing the part of a crazy man, "scrabbling" at the doors of the gates he never should have entered. At the very moment when he had won Saul to a better mind and heart (26:21-25), he again weakened and sought military service and support for his band, in the employ of Achish

(27:1-12). Here he lived a double life—raiding the foes of Judah, and deceiving his patron, who in these scenes, appears to far better advantage than David.

h. Zik'lag and the Am'alekites, chapters 28-30. How was David, when caught in the meshes of his deception, saved from fighting against his own fellow-countrymen? How did he find himself in serious trouble back at home, and how did he win out by courage, leadership, and faith? What fair principle did he announce and follow, a principle that has since become proverbial? (30:24, 25.) What generous course with the spoil prepared the way for his coronation? (30:26-31.)

What sort of a man was David at thirty? How had the testing experiences of his varied career served to prepare him for his further life-work as king and poet?

10. GOD IN THE BOOK

(1) *Guiding the National Development.*

How does the narrator of all this history constantly see the hand of God in the progress of events? See chapter 3:21; 5:6; 7:10, and find other similar passages. Note also the new title for God, "the Lord of Hosts," used for the first time in chapter 1:3; find other passages, especially 17:45.

(2) *The Institutions of Religion.*

The Tabernacle was at Shi'loh. Some more permanent buildings had no doubt grown up around it. Hence the word "temple" in 1:9, anticipating the more glorious building of Solomon's day.

The Ark was its central feature. Carried to battle, captured by the Philistines, returned when the plague was ascribed to its presence (6:1-17), it abode for twenty years in Kir'jath-je'arim (7:1, 2).

Bands of prophets made their headquarters at Samuel's home town, Ra'mah. The word "Nai'oth," found only in 19:18-20:1, means "habitations," and is taken to mean the group of buildings in which these students and proclaimers of God's truth resided.

The headquarters of the priesthood, or at least *one* such, was at Nob, near Jerusalem. Though the Ark was not there, shewbread was (21:1-6), and the sword of Goliath was there preserved (7-9).

Abi'jah, one of the line of Eli (14:3), was with Saul in his camp; his brother, Abim'elech (22:9), was, with other priests, slain for Saul by Do'eg the E'domite; his son, Abi'athar, escaped, and served as priest with David and his band of outlawed men (22:20-23; 23:9-12; 30:7). The eph'od was the priestly vestment by which the will of God was sought (Exod. 28:30). Samuel had a small one made for him when he ministered under Eli (2:18).

(3) *Some of the Great Passages.*

The book is rich in striking statements of truth about God and man's relations to Him. A few examples are:

1:23, "The Lord establish His word." A fine expression of El'kanah's desire.

2:2, "Neither is there any rock like our God." An equally fine expression of Hannah's trust.

12:23; 15:22, 23, 29, High spots in Samuel's declarations about God and our duty.

14:6, last clause, Jon'athan's fine statement about how God works.

17:37, David's great declaration of trust in God.

Find five other passages that appeal to you as especially fine in revealing the human heart and the divine supply for its needs.

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON FIRST SAMUEL

1. Why is the book named as it is? Give a simple outline of its contents.

2. Where are its scenes chiefly laid? Name and locate two important places connected with Samuel; two with Saul; two with Jon'athan; two with David.

3. What happened in the valley of E'tah? what at the cliff of Mich'mash? what in the cave of Enge'di? In each case how does the scene exactly fit the story?

4. How long did Saul reign? Contrast the scenes connected with his bright beginning with those accompanying his dark end.

5. Describe briefly the most important of Samuel's dealings (1) with Saul; (2) with David.

6. What did Samuel do for the nation as a religious leader?

7. How did Jon'athan meet the difficult situation of loyalty

to his father on one hand, and to his bosom friend on the other? Ought he to have left Saul and attached himself to David, and to David's fortunes?

8. What are the outstanding events in David's career, from his life as shepherd boy to his flight from his father-in-law's murderous jealousy?

9. Mention three places connected with David's career as fugitive, and describe what occurred at each.

10. Describe the state of religion during this period. Mention some of the great passages of the book.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE UNITED KINGDOM II

SECOND SAMUEL

DAVID, THE KING, AND HIS SONS

1. THE TITLE

THIS book contains the history of David, his family, and his kingdom. As already stated, it gets its title from the great prophet whose influence continues through the period, though his earthly life has ended.

2. THE KIND OF LITERATURE

Again we have prose narrative. The writer does not shrink from telling the evil as well as the good, even in the great king. Two fine poems are introduced, one at the beginning, the other at the end. David's lament for Saul and Jon'athan in chapter 1 is full of deep and tender feeling. At the end of his victories we have in chapter 22 a psalm of praise, which we also find in the book of Psalms, as Psalm 18. This is followed in chapter 23:1-7 by David's last words, which are also in poetic form. They reflect his love for and trust in God, together with his consciousness of having wandered from Him.

3. THE OUTLINE

	CHAPTERS
1. David King over Judah.....	1-4
(1) Laments Saul and Jon'athan.....	1
(2) Made King at He'bron.....	2:1-6
(3) Saul's Son, Ishbosh'eth, and General, Ab'ner, Both Perish. David Deals Righteously and Magnanimously.....	2-4
2. David King of All Israel.....	5-20
(1) Accepted by All the Tribes, Makes Jerusalem His Capital.....	5

	CHAPTERS
(2) Brings Up the Ark, and Desires to Build the Temple.....	6, 7
(3) Conquers Foes, and Shows Kindness to Jon'athan's Son.....	8-10
(4) The War with Ammon, and David's Great Sin	11, 12
(5) David's Sin Followed by Sin and Dissension in His Household.....	13, 14
(6) Absalom's Rebellion and Death.....	15-18
(7) David's Return, and Sheba's Rebellion.	19, 20
3. Additional Incidents, Lists and Psalms....	21-24
(1) The Famine, Riz'pah's Devotion, Philistine Giants Slain.....	21
(2) David's Song of Praise after His Victories	22
and His Last Words.....	23:1-7
(3) The Lists of David's Mighty Men....	23:8-39
(4) The Census and the Pestilence, Araunah's Threshing Floor.....	24

4. THE GEOGRAPHY

The places referred to in 2 Samuel begin with Zik'lag and He'bron, in the south, and extend with David's conquests far to the east and north.

He'bron is today, as it has been since Abraham's time, the most important locality in southern Palestine. All Bible maps show it. When David became king over all the tribes, it was too far south for a capital; hence Jerusalem was captured, and made from that time on the center of the nation.

Mahana'im, meaning "two camps," was named by Jacob when on his return from Ha'ran he there saw the angels of God. It was east of the Jordan, and northeast of Jerusalem. It was chosen by Ab'ner as a safe headquarters for the waning rule of Ishbosh'eth. Here David fled at the time of Absalom's rebellion, and here he received the sad news of his son's death. The "Ar'abah" is the term used for the Jordan Valley, down which the murderers of Ishbosh'eth made all speed to He'bron, only to get the just reward of an evil deed.

Tyre, from which Hi'ram sent timbers and workmen to David, lies on the Mediterranean to the northwest.

David's conquests included, first, the Philistines on the southwest; Mo'ab and E'dom to the southeast; then Syria, including Zo'bah and Damas'cus, to the northeast, and Ha'math to the north.

Ammon, with which David was at war, was the high plateau region east of the Jordan, above the Dead Sea. Its capital city, Rab'bah, held a very strong position near the head of the great ravine of the Jab'bok. It was in connection with the siege of Rab'bah that David had Uri'ah killed. When Absalom fled after killing his brother, Am'nion, he went to Ge'shur, a kingdom to the northeast, of which his mother had been a princess before David made her his wife. When he started his rebellion, he naturally chose as headquarters He'bron, where he was born (2 Sam. 3:3), and where his father had first ruled.

The ford by which David crossed the Jordan, on his flight to Mahana'im, and on his return, was doubtless the same great ford, opposite Jericho, by which the Children of Israel, under Joshua, had entered the land. Near by it, at Gil'gal (2 Sam. 19:15; see also Josh. 5:9), the men of Judah gathered to welcome the king back.

Locate these and other places mentioned in 2 Samuel on any good map of the United Kingdom, or of the Dominions of David and Solomon. Most of them will be found, also, on any map of the Kingdoms of Judah and Israel.

5. THE CHRONOLOGY

In our study of 1 Samuel we fixed 1062 B.C. as the year of David's coronation over Judah, and 1055 B.C. over all Israel as well. Ishbosh'eth's two years rule at Mahana'im must have been toward the latter part of David's seven years at He'bron, the earlier years being an unsettled period in the north.

The war with Ammon, and David's sin regarding Bathshe'ba and Uri'ah, must have been about the middle of his reign, as Ammon and Absalom, both of whom were born during his rule at He'bron, soon after come into the story as young men. Solomon, born about this time to David and Bathshe'ba, is a young man when brought to the throne at David's death. (His son, Rehobo'am, was born about the beginning of Solomon's reign. See 1 Kings 14:21 and 11:42.)

The incidents described in the appended chapters (21-24)

are not in their chronological places, but occurred at different times during the forty years reign. The census and the pestilence belong at its end.

6. DAVID, THE GREAT KING

The one outstanding figure in 2 Samuel is King David. A born leader of men, after his long period of discipline and training he comes to the throne, and wins the hearts as he protects the lives, and benefits the fortunes, of his people. "Whatsoever the king did pleased all the people," we read in 3:36, a situation which changes, however, when he falls into his great sin. Because of that sin his life's sun is shrouded with clouds at its setting.

Read the whole book carefully; and then, reviewing it, think of David as

(1) *A Loyal and Magnanimous Friend.*

"The Song of the Bow," as his lament for Saul and Jon'athan has been called, finely shows his spirit. By joining them both together, he is able to say what was true and worthy about Saul, and to omit what was evil. After all Saul's injustice to him that had for years kept his life in jeopardy, there is no note either of triumph or of bitterness; while for Jon'athan his heart is poured out in tender feeling and noble praise.

The whole story of his dealings with Mephib'osheth, told further on in the book (see chapters 9 and 19), illustrates David's devotion to Jon'athan's memory, and generous kindness to his afflicted son. Trace the story to see how this is true.

(2) *A Ruler Who Executed Justice, but Hated Treachery.*

How did he reward the Am'alekite who brought him news of Saul's death? Was the young man's story true? Compare 1 Samuel 31:3-6. Even though Saul's death relieved David from danger, and opened the path to the throne, he was too patriotic and too loyal to God (2 Sam. 1:16) to rejoice in the victory of heathen foes and the bitter end of the one who had been anointed by God's prophet as the nation's leader.

He did not hesitate to shed blood in war, and even with a cruelty which went to limits impossible for us to justify (chap.

8:2), but treacherous deceit stirred his soul to its depths. The three sons of Zeru'iah, who were his nephews (1 Chron. 2:16), though probably near his age, were among his bravest soldiers. Abish'ai was his companion on that night exploit when he spared Saul's life in the wilderness (1 Sam. 26:6). David himself said that they were "too hard for him" (2 Sam. 3:39). Ab'ner's deed in slaying A'sahel was done in self-defence after warning (2:19-23), but Joab's killing of Abner (3:23-27) was meanly treacherous, and David showed his horror of it by public mourning and lament (3:31-34).

How did he show the same spirit in his treatment of the murderers of his weak rival, Ishbosh'eth? (See chap. 4:1-3, 5-12.)

(3) *A Vigorous Military Leader.*

His first step after all the tribes had accepted him as king was to secure a new capital. He'bron was too far to the south, and too narrowly associated with the tribe of Judah. Jerusalem lay high on the central ridge, on a site surrounded except on the north by hill slopes adapted to fortification. So strong did the Jeb'usites regard it that they claimed that even the blind and the lame could defend it (5:6). Bravery and strategy defeated their boast and turned it into a proverb (v. 8). One of the watercourses was used as a way of approach for a surprise assault, probably at night, as was later done when Wolfe led the British against the French, and captured Quebec. The city gets two new names: the "city of David," applied specially to the section in which David built his own house; and "Zion," literally "sunny," a dry hillslope facing the sun, which David's psalms have introduced into hymnology and worship unto this day.

The Philis'tines naturally challenged the new power growing dangerously strong so near to them. As the lad had appealed for Jeho'vah's help against their champion when he faced him with a sling, so now the king seeks Jeho'vah's guidance, and receives it once and again (5:17-25). The enemy's idols are left strewn on the field as tokens of their helplessness, just as their god, Dagon, was earlier found fallen before the Ark of God (1 Sam. 5:4).

The eighth chapter gives a summary account of the campaigns by which David protected his own boundaries by

bringing surrounding nations into subjection. There was no great world power at this time in the Mesopotamian Valley, such as we shall find later, and Egypt was not reaching out toward the East. The Syrians, with Damascus as their ancient capital, joined other smaller nations (8:5 and 10:6) against Israel, but in vain. Their mention in 8:13 is probably a manuscript error for E'domites. (Compare 1 Chronicles 18:11, 12 and the title to Psalm 60.) Notice that Joab and Abish'ai are mentioned there as David's leaders.

The Ammonite campaign we shall consider later in connection with David's great sin. It is enough now to say that in all this warfare we must think of David as a man of his times. The writer of 2 Samuel ascribes David's victories to Jeho'vah's blessing (8:6). Certainly Israel was the one nation to whom the true and living God had revealed Himself and through whom He was working out redemption for all men. David was far in advance of others in his knowledge of God, as his psalms abundantly show, but he did not, and indeed could not, have the sense of human brotherhood and the missionary spirit which are born of the gospel. But he was

(4) *A Devout Worshiper of the Living God.*

As soon as he had a capital, and had built a house for his family, and protected himself and his people from Philistine assaults, his first great undertaking was to bring the Ark of God into the new capital city, and establish there a center of worship.

Recall the national experiences with the Ark, as already studied in 1 Samuel: the superstitious reliance upon it that led to its being taken to battle; the disastrous effect both upon Israel and the Philistines; the lesson of reverence at Bethshe'mesh; the blessing upon the households that made for it a place of abode. Ba'ale Judah of 2 Samuel 6:2 is another name for Kir'jath-je'arim (See 1 Chron. 13:6.), where the Ark had rested since it was brought there from the Philistine country. Uz'zah and Ahi'o were probably sons of Elea'zer, and grandsons of Abin'adab. (See 1 Sam. 7:1, 2.) The word "sons" in the Old Testament is often used in that freer sense.

The "breach" upon Uz'zah for his error (2 Sam. 6:6-8) was a blow upon David as well. His intentions were of the

best; but it was needful that the lesson of reverence and exact obedience should be learned by him and the nation even at the cost of a life. Encouraged by the blessing upon O'bed-e'dom's household, he repeated the undertaking, and the joy of that great day was all the greater because of the disaster of the first attempt. The sacrifice of thanksgiving (v. 13) was offered as soon as it was evident that this time God's blessing was on the enterprise. This time the Ark was "borne" as in Moses' day, and not carried in a cart. Mi'chal's contempt of her husband showed that in her there was none of the reverence for religion, or joy in God, which filled David's heart. Psalm 24 is the inspired poetic expression of his exultant feelings on this day.

The Ark was placed in a tent, but David desired to build for it a house. The seventh chapter contains two fine expressions of religious truth. The first is a prophetic utterance, the first since Samuel's day, by the prophet Nathan, who is to speak to David once again and in different tones. The second is David's prayer. Read them both carefully and see what they tell us about the worship of God that applies to us today just as truly as in David's time. What was promised concerning David's household and kingdom? In what sense is it true that his throne has been "established forever"?

But David was also

(5) *A Man with Human Passions, Who Sinned, Repented, and Suffered.*

The campaign against Ammon, about the middle of David's reign, is a turning point in his career. Living by the standards of his time—which are not ours—even before he came to the throne he had taken two wives, besides Mi'chal, Saul's daughter, who had failed to share his fortunes (1 Sam. 25:43, 44). At He'bron other wives were added, and bore to him sons (2 Sam. 3:2-5). Of one daughter we read (2 Sam. 13:1), and there were doubtless more. 1 Chronicles 3:1-9 lists fifteen sons, and refers to others born of concubines. The facts are merely recorded without comment. But the evils that developed in the royal family, built up by polygamy and concubinage, which the moral standards of that day not merely permitted but expected in a king, are plainly revealed as the history develops.

David's great sin, described in the eleventh and twelfth chapters, consisted in adultery with another man's wife, murder of the husband, for which he was as responsible as if he had done it with his own hand, hypocrisy in his comment upon the news (11:25), and underlying it all the treacherous deceit which he had hitherto so severely judged in others.

The whole story is a vivid picture of the evil possibilities in every human heart, and of the need of the warning, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). It is a picture, too, of a just God, who does not overlook sin even in those who have shown themselves most devoted to Him. Nathan's parable (12:1-6), one of the most beautiful and at the same time heart-searching in all Scripture, stirs David's sense of righteousness; but it takes the prophet's brave thrust to open the king's eyes to his own deed. Then came true penitence, poured out in the great penitential psalm, the Fifty-first. Forgiveness came also (see Psalm 32); but the sin had to bear its penalty (12:10-23). The first blow, in the child's death, David bore like a man who knows and trusts his God; but other penalties were yet to follow. From now on the life of the great king is to have many sorrows, and we are to see him as

(6) *A Tender-Hearted Father Who Fails in Ruling His Own Household.*

David's sin was quickly followed by that of his first-born son, the heir to the throne. The Bible is a plain-spoken book, and the narrative reveals the lust of the flesh in Amnon; the wily shrewdness of his cousin, Jon'adab; the base treatment of the lovely girl (see her far-seeing estimate of it in chap. 13:12, 13); the revulsion, injustice, and sorrow that followed the cruel gratification of passion.

The news of the deed filled the king's heart with bitter anger (v. 21); but, no doubt hindered by his own similar wrongdoing, he took no action in the case. Absalom bides his time in silence—"two full years"—and then he avenges the wrong done to Ta'mar, by a plot that issues in Amnon's death. That the deed was not wholly due to righteous indignation we may feel sure; it brought him a step nearer to succession to the throne. (Of Chil'eab, the second son, we hear nothing except his birth, 3:3.) To insure his own safety and await

his father's reaction on the deed, Absalom fled to his grandfather's court, and there dwelt for three years.

Sad years they were indeed for David. Absalom was handsome, ambitious, attractive, a natural leader. Amnon was dead, and the king longed for the son of his heart and his hopes. Joab, with an eye no doubt to his own position in the state, but at the same time with loyalty to David, and sympathy for Absalom, accomplishes the return; and finally, under Absalom's pressure (14:28-33), the reconciliation. The use of the woman of Teko'a was a wise path to the king's heart. The son confesses no error in having taken action into his own hands, and his restoration to favor under such conditions shows the affectionate father rather than the wise and just ruler. The outcome is to be expected, and next we see David as

(7) *A Great-Hearted Leader, Whose Sorrows Serve to Bring Out the True Character of Others.*

Absalom is typical of the man who "looks out for Number One." Had he been willing to wait his time, he would have been the natural successor to the throne. But he returned his father's love with selfish ingratitude. By wiles characteristic of the shrewd politician he built up a following, and then started an insurrection.

Read the story carefully to note how David's troubles bring out the character of all about him.

It'tai the Gittite is the loyal soldier, "a foreigner and an exile," but devoted to the king "whether for death or for life."

Za'dok and Abi'athar, the priests, are also loyal, and their sons, Ahim'aaz and Jon'athan, serve as swift and trustworthy messengers.

Ahith'ophel, David's counselor, was won over to Absalom (15:12), but Hu'shai's counsel had greater weight and enabled the fleeing king to put the fords of the Jordan between himself and the gathered forces of his rebellious son (17:5-14).

Zi'ba, Mephib'osheth's servant, seizes the opportunity to slander his master, and secure that master's property for himself (16:1-4). Mephib'osheth (19:24-30) shows true devotion to his great and generous benefactor, caring more for the king than for himself or his land—an Old Testament type of the Christian's attitude toward his Lord and Master.

Foul-mouthed Shim'ei gave free rein to cutting speech (16:5-14), but hastened to save his skin when the return of the king put his life in jeopardy (19:16-23). He found mercy and not judgment on the glad day of the king's return, but paid the penalty later (1 Kings 2:36-46).

Barzil'ai, rich and aged, dwelling in Gil'ead, east of the Jordan, provided the fleeing king and his followers with much needed supplies (17:27-29). His son, Chimham, shared the royal bounty on the return (19:31-40).

Joab is the man of war, loyal to the king in his reverses, but disobedient to his command regarding the rebellious son. He had brought about reconciliation between them (14:33), but he dealt just the opposite of "gently" with the one who had sought both his father's throne and life. His plain speech to the broken-hearted king averted threatening disaster (19:1-8). He and his brother, Abish'ai, were great fighters, but they had none of the forgiving spirit which in David won men's hearts (19:21-23 and 19:11-14). Moreover, he adds another treacherous deed to his earlier slaughter of Ab'ner by killing Am'asa (20:7-10).

In all these experiences we see David humble before God, and noble in his dealings with men. He lets Shim'ei curse him, because he sees in it God's judgment on his own sin (16:11). He trusts his cause to God (15:25, 26), but he at the same time makes wise plans for thwarting Absalom's plan to destroy him (15:27-37).

The story of his reception of the news of Absalom's death is one of the most touching, not only in the Bible, but in all literature. An American poet, N. P. Willis, has put it into soul-stirring verse in his poem, "David and Absalom." Every true parent's heart beats in deepest sympathy with David's cry in chapter 18:33.

One more disaster had to be averted, in the rebellion of Sheba (chap. 20). In dealing with it Joab showed both his energy and his unscrupulousness.

7. ADDED INCIDENTS AND LISTS

Chapters 21 to 24 are really an appendix containing narratives, poems, and lists which add to our knowledge of David's reign.

(1) The famine recalls the dealing of Joshua with the Gib'-



eonites (Josh. 9:3, 15-20) and brings to light an act of Saul's of which we have no other knowledge (21:2). The atonement by the death of two sons and five grandsons of Saul was a drastic illustration of the sins of the father being visited upon his descendants. It led to a wonderful instance of maternal devotion on the part of Riz'pah (v. 10).

(2) Brave exploits are told of David and his men in hand-to-hand contests with the giants of Goliath's family (21:15-22), and his warriors are listed in the groups to which their mighty deeds admitted them (23:8-38). These lists are marked by the lovely incident of the water from the well at Bethlehem, in which we see the noble spirit of David at his best.

(3) That same spirit of devotion, gratitude, and trust, we find in the song (chap. 22) in which he celebrates his deliverance from all his foes. See its picture of divine deliverance based on the figure of a thunderstorm (8-19). Find some of its best verses about God and what He does for those who trust Him.

Notice the change of tone in David's last words (23:1-7). The confident exultation of such passages as 22:30, 36, 37, etc., is changed. Sin and sorrow, but also penitence and pardon, have left their mark. The ideal of the righteous ruler (vs. 3, 4) he has not fully realized (v. 5) yet God is all his salvation and his desire.

(4) The last event is the census of Israel and Judah. The writer (24:1) ascribes the suggestion of the plan to God, with the purpose of judgment, while 1 Chronicles 21:1 ascribes it to Satan. David at least recognizes that he has been perverse and headstrong in the undertaking, and bows before the message of the prophet Gad. Of the three alternatives offered him he chooses the one in which he can cast himself and his people on God's mercy. The pestilence follows, and the outcome of it all is the consecration of Arau'nah's threshing floor, which later becomes the site for the Temple. In paying for it David (24:24) declares a worthy principle regarding all offerings to God.

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON SECOND SAMUEL

1. What portion of David's life is covered in this book? Which chapters are located at He'bron? Which in Jerusalem?

2. Which chapters are added and not in chronological order? What do they contain?

3. What fine poems are found near the beginning and near the end of the book? What scenes in the prose narrative are most moving in their pathos? What do all of these show regarding David and regarding his God?

4. Mention two important events in the book connected with He'bron; three with Jerusalem; one with the capital city of Ammon; one with the Jordan ford; one with Mahana'im.

5. Describe the steps by which David came first to the throne of Judah, and then to that of all Israel.

6. How did he show his devotion to God in his treatment of the Ark? in his plans for the building of the Temple?

7. How did he show his magnanimous spirit in his dealings with Ab'ner? with Mephib'osheth? with Shim'ei?

8. What weaknesses do we see in David's character in his dealings with Uriah? with Joab? with Absalom?

9. Who was Amnon? Ta'mar? Ziba? Uz'zah? Hu'shai? Nathan? Riz'pah?

10. Give your own estimate of David as a man and as a king.

CHAPTER NINE

THE DIVIDED KINGDOM I

FIRST KINGS

SOLOMON AND THE TEMPLE; ISRAEL AND
JUDAH; ELIJAH, THE PROPHET

1. THE TITLE

THE First Book of Kings covers the history of the United Kingdom through Solomon's reign, and then, after the division, shifts from Judah to Israel and back again, ending with the reigns of Jehosh'aphat in Judah, and Ahazi'ah in Israel. The title emphasizes the influence of the kings on the nation, and the narrative keeps them in the foreground. The prophets, however, act an important part; culminating, throughout the later chapters, in the heroic deeds and searching words of Elijah.

2. THE LITERARY FORM

Prose narration; we find no poetry in the book, and no lists, if we except that of Solomon's provision officers in chapter 4. After the division the author's method is to follow the rule of a king of Judah to its end, then turn to contemporary kings in Israel, coming back again to Judah, and ending with Israel. He is ever looking for and enlarging upon the events that have a religious bearing. He gives us history as it reveals God's dealings, and these he takes pains to point out and apply.

3. THE OUTLINE

	CHAPTERS
1. Solomon's Glorious but Weakening Reign.	I-II
(1) Comes to the Throne and Removes His Opposers	1, 2
(2) His Wisdom and His Wealth.....	3, 4

	CHAPTERS
(3) The Building of the Temple.....	5-8
Preparation	5
Description	6, 7
Dedication	8
(4) Growing in Wealth, but Forgetting God	9-11
(a) Warning	9
(b) Magnificence	10
(c) Idolatry and Adversaries.....	11
2. The Divided Kingdom, from Rehobo'am to Ahazi'ah	12-22
(1) Rehobo'am's Weak Folly Leads to the Division	12
(2) Jerobo'am Leads Israel into Calf Worship	13, 14
(3) A'sa and Jehosh'aphat Rule Well in Judah; Weak Kings in Israel (Na'dab, Ba'asha, E'lah, Zim'ri, Om'ri) Bring Repeated Disasters.....	15, 16
(4) A'hab and Jez'ebel Rule, but Elijah Stands for God and Righteousness...	17-22
(a) Preserved at the Brook and in the Widow's Home.....	17
(b) Shows the Emptiness of Baal Worship at Mount Car'mel.....	18
(c) Learns More about God at Ho'reb	19
(d) The War with Syria; Ahab Shows His Weakness.....	20
(e) Na'both's Vineyard; Elijah Denounces Ahab	21
(f) Jehosh'aphat Joins Ahab against Syria; Ahab and Jez'ebel Slain; Ahazi'ah's Short but Evil Reign.	22

4. THE GEOGRAPHY

Solomon's authority during the height of his rule extended (4:21) from the River (*i. e.*, the Euphrates) to the border of Egypt. The cedar and fir for the Temple came from Leb-

anon, the range to the north of Palestine and inland from Tyre, whose king, Hiram, aided the great undertaking.

E'zion-ge'ber, from which Solomon sent his ships, was at the northern end of the eastern arm of the Red Sea. O'phir, from which they brought gold, cannot be definitely located. It is variously placed on the west coast of Africa, in India, or Arabia. She'ba, from which the queen came to visit Solomon, was in southwestern Arabia, and its people were noted for their commerce.

Rehobo'am wisely chose She'chem for his coronation, for that would link him more closely with the northern tribes. Had he shown equal wisdom in answering their request, the result would have been otherwise. Locate She'chem, and recall its connection with Abraham, Jacob, and Gid'eon's son, Abim'elech.

Jerobo'am set up his golden calves at the two extremes of his territory: Dan, far to the north; and Beth'el, only a score or so of miles from Jerusalem, in the south. He established his royal residence at Tir'zah (14:17), and this became the northern capital (15:21, 33; 16:6, etc.) until Om'ri found a much better natural site for a city, not many miles away, and there built Sama'ria (16:24). Tir'zah is forgotten, and its site is not certain; but Sama'ria remains to this day, at least as a ruin. It gave its name to the people of Central Palestine even until Jesus' day. Locate it; any good map will show its central position. Ahab and Jez'ebel had a palace also at Jez'reel (18:45), and there Ahab coveted Na'both's vineyard (chap. 21). Jez'reel was a fortified town, lying on a knoll toward the eastern end of the great plain to which it gave its name.

Gib'bethon, a town near the coast, had been assigned by Joshua to the tribe of Dan (Josh. 19:44), but it had fallen into the hands of the Philis'tines. Twice it was besieged by Israel. The first siege was marked by a conspiracy in which Na'dab was slain (15:27), and Ba'asha succeeded him. Twenty-eight years later the siege was again on; and Om'ri, the captain of the host, was made king in place of the usurper Zim'ri, who had wiped out Ba'asha's wicked house.

The brook Che'rith, where Elijah was fed, flowed into the Jordan, probably from the eastern highlands, below the Sea of Galilee. Zar'epheth, where the widow woman sustained

him while his presence sustained her, was on the coast just south of Sidon, in the very region from which his bitter enemy, Jez'ebel, had come.

Car'mel is the outstanding ridge that extends northwest to the Mediterranean and forms at that western end the southern border of the great Plain of Jez'reel. The River Ki'shon flows to the sea along the edge of the plain at Car'mel's base. The spot was well chosen by Elijah for the great dramatic contest between him and the priests of Baal. Much of the Northern Kingdom would lie in view from its top, while from its western height his servant would look over the sea for the cloud no bigger than a man's hand, but full of portent.

When Elijah fled from Jez'ebel he went to Ho'reb, the mount of God (19:8), where his great predecessor, Moses, received the Law. There he met God, as Moses had done before him.

A'phek, where Benha'dad fought against Ahab (20:26), has not yet been positively identified, but was not far from the Jordan, and probably on the western, or Israelitish side. Ra'moth-gil'ead, "height of Gil'ead," is probably the same as the Miz'peh, "watchtower," where Jeph'thah lived. It lay across Jordan almost directly east of Sama'ria, on the Jab'bok, and was an important post to hold against invasion from that quarter.

5. THE CHRONOLOGY

We now reach more definite statements regarding time. Having already fixed 1062 B.C. as the probable date for David's accession to the throne, we place Solomon's at 1022, which brings his death, and Rehobo'am's accession, with the disruption of the kingdom, to 982 B.C.

From that point on we have the length of each reign given for both the kings of Judah and of Israel. It is not possible to completely harmonize these dates, because it was the Jewish custom to count any part of a year as a year. If, for example, a king came to the throne in the autumn of one year and reigned to the summer of the next, the length of his reign would be given as two years. Remembering this, we may tabulate the reigns, as far as 1 Kings takes us, thus:

KINGS OF JUDAH				KINGS OF ISRAEL			
		<i>1 Kings</i>				<i>1 Kings</i>	
	<i>Reigned</i>	<i>Chapter</i>			<i>Reigned</i>	<i>Chapter</i>	
Rehobo'am	17 years	14:21	I }	Jerobo'am	22 years	14:20	
				Na'dab ..	2 "	15:25	
Abi'jam	3 "	15:2	II }	Ba'asha ..	24 "	15:33	
A'sa	41 "	15:10		E'lah	2 "	16:8	
				Zim'ri (7 days)		16:15	
Jehosh'aphat ..	25 "	22:42	III }	Om'ri ...	12 "	16:23	
				Ahab	22 "	16:29	
				Ahazi'ah .	2 "	22:51	
	<hr/> 86				<hr/>		

First Kings ends with Ahazi'ah's history uncompleted, but Jehosh'aphat's rule must have lasted at least six years beyond Ahazi'ah's death (cf. chap. 22:42, 51).

What is most worth noting is the longer reigns of the better kings in Judah, and the violent changes in constantly-sinful Israel, where there were three different dynasties (besides the usurper Zim'ri) in the short period of eighty-six years.

6. "SOLOMON IN ALL HIS GLORY"

Solomon's training was very different from that of his father. He was born to David and Bath-she'ba after Uri'ah's death (2 Sam. 12:24), and was probably about twenty when he came to the throne. He must have known of Amnon's death, and certainly of Absalom's rebellion. He had no discipline of suffering and trial like David had, but he must have known many of the Psalms written by David and by others in David's day, and he no doubt knew many "words of the wise" before he himself began to utter still wiser ones.

The story of Adoni'jah's attempt to seize the throne shows (1) a selfish youth for whom too much had been unwisely done (chap. 1:5, 6); (2) a mother too easily influenced and lacking in discernment (1:11-21; 2:13-21); (3) a prophet who knew how to read the meaning of events, and to act so as to influence them (1:22-40); and (4) a young king who read character and executed justice (1:49-53; 2:24-46). If the sentences upon Adoni'jah, Joab, and Shim'eï seem severe, we must remember that their own deeds brought their blood upon their heads. In Abi'athar's case the writer points out how his expulsion from the priest's office fulfilled the sentence upon

Eli's house (1 Sam. 2:31-36). The order of descent was Eli—Phin'eas—Ahi'tub—Abim'elech—Abi'athar. Za'dok was descended from Aaron by the other line. This is the first place in the Bible where an occurrence is said "to fulfil the word of the Lord." We shall find this statement, or its equivalent, often again.

The first verse of the third chapter shows the beginning of the fatal error which was to mar Solomon's reign and weaken his character. Alliance with foreign nations by marriage was forbidden in the Law (Deut. 7:3, 4), and the very result there warned against was later fully realized in Solomon's case (11:1-8). It became literally true that "outlandish" women demoralized the king and rotted the nation. If only Solomon had been true to the choice he made in his dream at Gib'eon (3:4-15), his wisdom would not have failed him in his great prosperity. That wisdom is illustrated in his skilful discerning of the true mother (3:16-28) who, though she had fallen upon evil ways, loved her child.

We read further (chap. 4) of his officers, his organized food supply, the extent of his rule, and, above all, of the peace and happiness of the people. Of his own attainments in knowledge of nature and of human life we are told, and of these we shall see proof when we come to study the book of Proverbs. The visit of the Queen of She'ba (10:1-10) was a striking testimony to his fame, and proved the truth of the report of his wisdom.

His alliance with Hi'ram led to voyages of commerce (9:26-28), which Jehosh'aphat later made a disastrous attempt to repeat (22:28). The Hebrew people never made a success of commerce by sea, as did other dwellers on the Mediterranean. It was their calling to be a separate people, and thus achieve a religion and a book which could later be passed on to all peoples.

Solomon was a great builder. His own palace, known as the "House of Lebanon" (its fir and cedar came from there), was thirteen years in building. But his great work, for which, together with his wisdom, he is best remembered, was

7. THE TEMPLE

(1) *Preparation.*

For this David, as we have seen, had both planned and pre-



pared. Recall how. Solomon cemented his father's friendship with Hiram, King of Tyre, in order to secure the necessary timber, and building skill (5:1-12). The stone was available at hand (5:17). It is only within the last century that an opening was discovered under the present north wall of Jerusalem, leading to a great quarry extending far under the city. The very wedge marks remain, showing where great stones were cut out such as were used both in the city walls and in the Temple foundations.

(2) *Description.*

The actual building began in Solomon's fourth year (6:1) and the work took seven and a half years (6:37, 38). The site was the top of Mount Mori'ah, used by Arau'nah as a threshing floor. How had Abraham already made it a sacred spot? (Gen. 22:2.) And how had David consecrated it? (2 Sam. 24:24, 25.)

The plan provided (1) a place for the Ark, the sacred symbol of God's presence; (2) a place of prayer and praise and sacrifice; and (3) opportunity for the assembling of great numbers of worshipers. It contained at its heart the Holy of Holies, here also called the oracle (6:16) or place where God spoke; that is, made Himself and His will known. This was a perfect cube, twenty cubits (30 feet. The cubit was the length of a man's forearm, $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet.) every way. Its walls, both within and without, were all of cedar, carved in cherubim, flowers, and palm trees, all overlaid with pure gold. Two great cherubim overshadowed the Ark, their wings extending from wall to wall and touching in the center (6:23-27).

In front of the oracle and making one building with it was the Holy Place. This was twice as long, and contained the golden altar of incense (6:20-22), the table of shewbread (7:48), and ten candlesticks (7:49). The Tabernacle had but one.

This glorious building was surrounded at the rear and on either side by a three-story addition containing rows of rooms for the priests and for everything connected with the worship (6:5-10). In front was a great porch, flanked by two magnificent pillars (7:15-22), whose names, Ja'chin and Bo'az, probably meant "He shall establish," and "In it is strength."

Two great courts surrounded the Temple, one for the

priests, containing the brazen altar of sacrifice, the molten sea, and the ten lavers; the other, for the people, a little lower and separated by a low wall (6:36 and 7:12). This great outer court had its own surrounding wall, and the whole Temple platform was built up to a level upon foundations of hewn stone, each twelve to fifteen feet long (7:10).

Try to picture it all, and think how, with its golden walls and roof gleaming in the sun, the smoke of incense and sacrifice rising toward heaven, and throngs filling its courts, it must have appealed to worshipers coming up to the annual feasts.

(3) *Dedication.*

Nowhere else do we find Solomon so great or so worthy as on the day of the Temple's dedication, described in chapter 8. With all its splendor, the Temple was but an empty shell until the Ark of the Covenant was brought in, and the House was filled with the cloud by which God showed His approval (vs. 1-11). Reverently read Solomon's address to the people and his prayer of dedication, and think (1) what we may learn from them about God; and (2) for what national needs he sought God's favor and help. What might we well add to these if we were praying for our own nation today?

8. THE DISRUPTION

Solomon's later years, like David's, saw their troubles. He *knew* better than he *did*. His magnificence was too much for him. It is sad enough to turn from such a scene as the dedication of the Temple, to read (11:1-8) of the abominable idolatry which he not only permitted, but promoted. His wisdom did not control his heart. And we do not read in his case, as in David's, of penitence, confession, and pardon. So, while we read the Proverbs for counsel, we turn to David's Psalms when in our hearts we seek after God.

Trouble began from E'dom (11:14-22); and Egypt, with which Solomon had made his alliance by marriage, provided a refuge both for the E'domite, Ha'dad, and later for Jerobo'am (11:40). Shi'shak was the founder of a new dynasty, which no doubt helps to explain Egypt's unfriendly attitude toward Solomon.

Damas'cus, too, threw off the yoke (11:23-28); but the real

trouble was internal. And God's judgment was in it. Solomon's own energetic young foreman of labor, Jerobo'am, no doubt knew the restlessness of the people under the heavy expense of magnificent rule, but it was God's prophet, Ahi'jah, of Shi'loh (11:29-39), who read the future and inspired Jerobo'am first to flight, and then, after Solomon's death, to speech and action.

It was Solomon's own son, however, whose folly brought on the crisis. Rehobo'am was forty-one when, at his father's death, he came to the throne. He was old enough, certainly, to have profited by his father's wisdom, but the luxury of the court had produced in him a weak character. It was a wise move to go to a central spot like She'chem for his coronation, but when the people's appeal for lessened taxation, voiced by Jerobo'am, came to him, neither he nor his young counselors knew how either to read the signs of the times, or to sympathize with the common people. His blustering and threatening answer exploded the mine of feeling, and ten tribes revolted (12:1-20).

Only Judah and Benjamin remained loyal. Another prophet (notice the fine title, "man of God," v. 22) forbade civil war. Henceforth to the end—captivity for each—we have a divided nation, north and south. Civil war there was (14:30), and base idolatry (22-24), and loss of Solomon's treasure by Egyptian invasion (25, 26).

9. ISRAEL'S EVIL RULERS

(1) *Jerobo'am.*

It is anticipating the history to point out the one great difference, from now to the end, between the two kingdoms, Israel and Judah. In Israel we have an unbroken succession of evil kings, varying only in vigor and in length of reign. In Judah we have revival and reform at different periods. Judah, therefore, lasted a century and more longer.

Israel had no central place of worship, and Jerobo'am provided an evil substitute in his altars at Beth'el and Dan, with a golden calf at each. This was not the idol worship of false gods, with sensual and cruel rites, such as Solomon fostered, but a man-made substitute for God's appointed way of worshiping the true God. It was a repetition of Aaron's sin, which so justly incensed Moses (Exod. 32:4, 8). Jerobo'am

added priests and feasts of his own making (12:32, 33), and himself usurped the priest's office.

The sentence came promptly from the mouth of an unnamed prophet out of Judah, accompanied by a sign to prove his commission (13:1-10) and to assure the fulfilment of the future judgment he pronounced (v. 2). Watch for this fulfilment in 2 Kings 23:15, 16. The prophet's own death, brought about by lying prophecy (v. 18), only served to emphasize the truth of his message (v. 32). Jerobo'am's withered arm was restored, but his heart was not changed (vs. 33, 34).

When sickness entered his house he hoped for help from the prophet Ahi'jah, who had first foreseen his advancement, but got from him a scorching sentence of judgment (14:1-18). So the child died and later the father, leaving as a monument only the title, oft repeated in Scripture, "Jerobo'am, the son of Nebat, who sinned, and caused Israel to sin." His sad preëminence is that he heads an unbroken line of sinning national leaders—a lesson indeed for all in places of influence and authority.

(2) *Weak and Wicked Successors.*

We need not even burden the memory with the names of the next four kings of Israel. The book of Kings passes over them briefly, and so may we. Na'dab (15:25, 26) followed his father's evil ways until Ba'asha slew him and all of Jerobo'am's line (vs. 27-30). But Ba'asha proved no better, and the prophet Jehu's sentence against him was fulfilled both upon him and his drunken son, E'lah (16:1-10). Zim'ri, one of his captains, is the executioner, but he reigns only seven days, dying on his own funeral pyre when the people choose Om'ri (16:11-20).

(3) *Om'ri's Line.*

Om'ri heads a more vigorous but no more righteous line. The city of Sama'ria is his real monument, and discoveries made there in very recent years mark his palace (16:21-28).

Ahab is worse than all before him, chiefly through the influence of his more vigorous and unscrupulous wife, Jez'ebel. With her comes Baal worship, with its iniquities (16:29-33). For such times God had His messenger ready in the person of

10. THE PROPHET ELIJAH

The story of Elijah is one of the most dramatic in all Scripture. His name means "The Lord (or Jeho'vah) is God," and his life was devoted to proving that Jeho'vah was the one true and living God, and that all other gods worshiped in Israel in his day were frauds and abominations. We know nothing of his youth or training, and are not sure where Tishbi, his birthplace, was. He "sojourned" in Gil'ead, the high plateau region east of the Jordan. Review the familiar story of his dealings with Ahab and Jez'ebel, and the Israel they misruled, grouping it around these outstanding scenes:

(1) *His Sudden and Startling Appearance, Announcing Drought and Famine.*

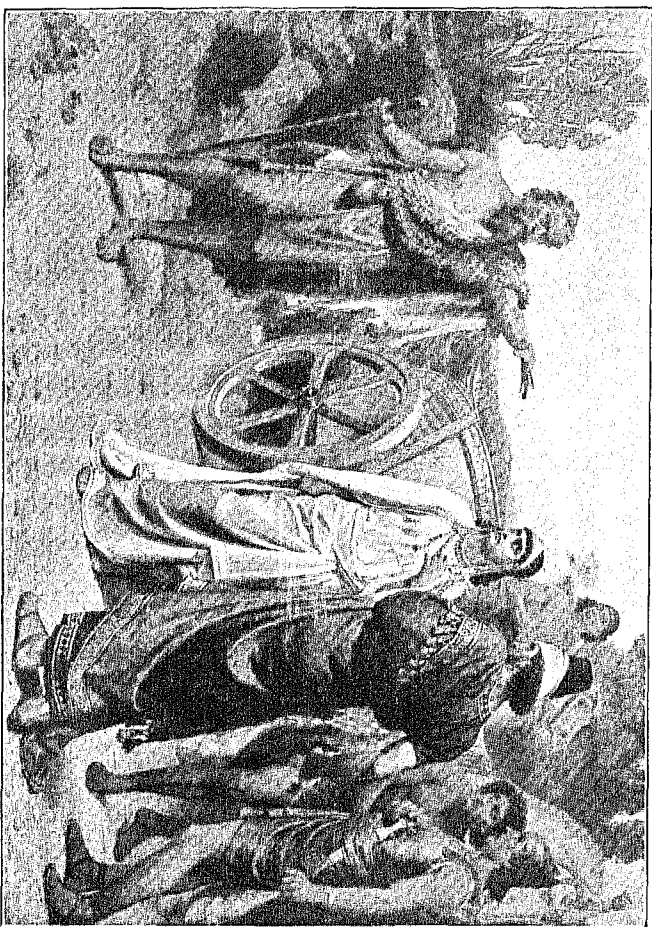
His own preservation by the birds of the air, and the poor widow in the enemy's land. The blessing his presence brought to her home. What did she learn? What does the story suggest to the Christian worker?

(2) *The Great Testing Scene on Car'mel.*

What does Obadi'ah's interview with him reveal as to the times? as to Jez'ebel's attempt to completely destroy the religion of Jeho'vah?

How does the Car'mel scene show the spirit of the one lone man who faced king and idolatrous priests? In what striking figure did he put the situation before the nation? (18:21 R.V.; cf. Matt. 6:24.) How did his God make the elements serve His prophetic messenger?

The striking form in which Elijah puts his own relation to his God is arresting. "As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand" (v. 15), testifies both to the living God and to the servant's devotion. Elijah *stood* in God's presence ready to instantly undertake any commission entrusted to him as God's servant. At Car'mel he stood against king and queen and idolatrous priests, but the Lord of hosts was with His servant, the fire of heaven fell, and the nation was, at least for the time, convinced as to who was the true God. The slaughter of the priests of Baal was a bloody surgical deed, but necessary to eradicate the cancer that was eating at the nation's heart.



AHAB AND ELIJAH

Francis B. Dicksee

(3) *Under the Juniper Tree and in the Cave.*

Jez'ebel was yet to be reckoned with, and with her there was neither compromise nor mercy. How can we account for Elijah's "let-down" and flight? How was he cared for in this hour of need, as he had been during the famine? How may we account for the inward guidance that directed him to "the mount of God"? What supreme lesson, the greatest, perhaps, that any follower of God can learn, was he there taught? What commission was he given? How did he find and anoint his successor? How did Elisha show himself worthy to go into training?

It is the same and yet a very different Elijah that we see in this nineteenth chapter. It was not true, as he said (v. 4), that he was no better than his fathers; but he was human, and after the strain of the Car'mel scene came a great reaction. The Lord of hosts was merciful to His servant, ministered unto him in the wilderness through angelic hands, and directed him to the spot that brought to mind all the associations connected with Moses and the deliverance of the nation from Egyptian bondage. There he was shown that, while God may send fire from heaven to convince a wavering nation, His more effective way of working is by the quiet but mighty influences that control human minds. We have at Ho'reb an intimation and a promise of that Spirit of God whose work Jesus described in His final talk with His followers, given to us in John 14 to 16.

To Elisha is left the actual anointing of Haz'ael and Jehu, as we shall find in 2 Kings. The twentieth chapter of 1 Kings tells of war between Syria and Israel and shows the blustering threats, followed by the reveling incompetency, of Benha'dad, the Syrian king. Ahab speaks well in chapter 22:11, and, under the encouragement and guidance of an unnamed prophet, defeats the Syrians, first on the hills near Sama'ria, and next year on the plain near A'phek. Notice the four prophetic messages of the chapter, vs. 13, 22, 28, 35-42. In spite of them, Ahab fails to see God's hand in it all, weakly compromises with the Syrian king, and again has to face Elijah.

(4) *In Na'both's Vineyard at Jez'reel.*

How does this story show Ahab's selfishness and weakness?

Jez'ebel's cruel unscrupulousness? The servility of the city's rulers? How did Elijah now dare to speak to him as he did? What effect did it have?

Here we find the Tish'bite striking the note of justice to the individual, which we shall find repeated again and again as we study the books of the writing prophets. It is a bold man indeed who says to his king, "Thou hast sold thyself to do that which is evil in the sight of the Lord" (21:20), but he knew that Ahab still had a conscience and that he believed in the prophet's God, even though he would not serve Him. For the time the king humbled himself before the Lord and thus his doom day was deferred.

We shall see Elijah once more in the opening chapters of Second Kings, where he ends his earthly mission by a fiery translation, and passes on his spirit to a gentler and more constructive successor.

The twenty-second chapter brings Jehosh'aphat into our story, and we turn back to briefly consider

11. THE KINGS OF JUDAH

(1) Of *Abi'ram*, Rehobo'am's son and successor, nothing can be said (chap. 15:1-8) except that God's mercy bore with his sins three years for the sake of his great-grandfather, David. The same will be found true of other wicked kings of David's line, but better things are true of

(2) *A'sa*. His long reign (15:9-24) overlapped those of all the kings of Israel from near the end of Jerobo'am's to the beginning of Ahab's. To meet an attack upon his kingdom by Ba'asha he bought help from Syria. He built cities. He vigorously uprooted idolatry, even removing the queen mother because of the image she had made for the worship of the goddess who in the Baal religion held some such place as that of Venus in the Roman. Of his reforms we shall read more fully in Chronicles. The same is true of

(3) *Jehosh'aphat*, who joined forces with Ahab to recover Ra'moth-gil'ead from Syria (chap. 22). The story of this campaign is of special interest because of the full description of the contest between the true prophet Micai'ah, who prophesied the death of Ahab and the scattering of the Israelitish army, and the false prophets, who servilely favored what they saw the king desired.

Jehosh'aphat's alliance with Ahab came near costing him his life (22:32, 33); but his reign of twenty-five years was on the whole a period of religious reform and prosperity in Judah.

12. FINE PASSAGES

Solomon's request at Gib'eon (3:9), which "pleased the Lord": "Give Thy servant an understanding heart to discern between good and evil," is a good petition for all to offer.

His prayer at the dedication of the Temple (chap. 8) contains many fine verses, notably v. 27.

Elijah's appeal at Car'mel is a great decision verse (18:21), and the account of what happened at Ho'reb (19:9-12) is one of the great Old Testament revelations of God.

Micai'ah's words in 22:14 should be the slogan for every preacher, or teacher, who seeks to speak on behalf of God.

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON FIRST KINGS

1. What was the condition of David's kingdom as his end drew near: (1) in relation to other nations; (2) inside the royal family; (3) religiously?

2. How did Solomon begin his reign with vigor and wisdom? What counsel and warning did he have from his father and his God? How did he stray from them, and with what results?

3. Give the chief facts that show the splendor of Solomon's reign.

4. Describe the causes that led to the separation into two kingdoms, and estimate the characters of the chief actors in the scenes connected with it.

5. Give a brief general description of Solomon's Temple. Illustrate it, if you can, with a simple sketch, showing its principal parts, and then tell to what use each was put.

6. Into what sin did Jerobo'am lead the northern nation? How was he sentenced for it? Why do we find no religious reforms in Israel?

7. Give all the facts you can showing the rise of prophecy during these dark days in Israel. What did Ahi'jah foretell regarding Jerobo'am? What did an unnamed prophet declare at Jerobo'am's altar at Beth'el, and how and why did that

same prophet lose his own life? What did Micai'ah prophesy regarding Ahab, and how was it fulfilled?

8. What new cities arose during this period? Tell where they were located, and give some fact connected with each.

9. Tell what impresses you most from the story of Elijah as we have found it in 1 Kings. What is the secret of his superb courage?

10. Tell something about each of the following: Adoni'jah; A'sa; Ahab; Hi'ram, the king; and Hi'ram, the workman; Obadi'ah.

CHAPTER TEN

THE DIVIDED KINGDOM II

SECOND KINGS

THE DOWNWARD COURSE: ELISHA; ISRAEL FALLS, THEN JUDAH

1. THE WRITER'S PLAN

THE literary form is still prose narrative, as in 1 Kings. The history moves from Israel to Judah and back again, until Israel's captivity is told in chapter 17. The remaining chapters then, of course, relate solely to Judah. The book ends with Jehoi'achin still a prisoner in Babylon. This, with other indications, makes it probable that Jeremi'ah wrote it, using many existing records, such as "the chronicles of the kings," which are referred to in concluding each reign.

While it is the kings of whom we read much more than of the people they ruled, the prophets, especially Elisha, hold the leading place in the story, since it is from them we chiefly receive the religious teaching of the history. The reigns that were marked by religious reform, those of Jo'ash, Hezeki'ah, and Josi'ah, occupy largest space, making a welcome contrast with the all too monotonous record of evil, idolatrous reigns, with the penalties they brought upon the nation.

2. THE OUTLINE

	CHAPTERS
1. The Divided Kingdom to Israel's Downfall.	1-17
(1) Elijah's Last Sentence upon an Evil King, and His Glorious Departure....	1:1-2:14
(2) Elisha's Words and Deeds of Healing and Help	2:15-9:10 also 13:14-21
Waters Healed; Mo'ab Defeated; Oil Multiplied; Dead Boy Restored to Life; Food Made Harmless and	

CHAPTERS

- Multiplied; Leper Healed; Eyes Closed and Opened; Sama'ria Delivered; New Leaders Anointed.
- (3) The Downward Course of Om'ri's Evil Line in Israel, and Its Blighting Influence in Judah..... 1; 3; 8
 - Ahab's Sons, Ahazi'ah and Jeho'ram, in Israel 1; 3
 - Ahab's Son-in-law and Grandson, Another Jeho'ram and Another Ahazi'ah, in Judah..... 8:16-29
- (4) Jehu the Destroyer..... 9; 10
- (5) Athali'ah, Wicked Queen Mother, Succeeded by Her Grandson, Jo'ash, Who Works Reform in Judah..... 11; 12
- (6) Jehu's Line Produces One Able King in Jerobo'am II; but One Feeble and Wicked King Succeeds Another in Israel until the Assyrian Captivity... 14; 15; 17
- (7) Evil Kings in Judah Reach Their Worst in A'haz 16
- 2. Judah from Hezeki'ah to Its Downfall.... 18-25
 - (1) The Great Reign of Hezeki'ah..... 18-20
 - Idolatry Overthrown; Assyrian Invasion; Deliverance; Lengthened Life.
 - (2) Exceeding Wickedness of Manas'seh and A'mon 21
 - (3) One More Great Revival Under Josi'ah 22; 23
 - (4) Under Josi'ah's Weak and Wicked Sons Babylon Carries Judah Into Captivity 24; 25

3. THE GEOGRAPHY

Sama'ria, which we found in 1 Kings was built by Om'ri, is here prominent as the capital of Israel. Jez'reel, to the east and north of it, remains a royal residence, and is the scene of Jehu's bloody deeds in chapter 9. Its watchtower had a

clear view toward the Jordan, from which the furious driver came.

Mo'ab, mentioned in chapter 1 and several times later, lay east of the lower Jordan. The Mo'abite Stone, a great archaeological discovery, found at Di'bon, on the Ar'nón, in 1868, contains an inscription of King Me'sha, mentioned in chapter 3, which refers to Om'ri and Ahab.

Elijah's journey before his translation took him and Elisha from Gil'gal, in the Jordan Valley, up the mountain range to Beth'el, then back to Jericho, and over the Jordan to the same general region in which Moses' departure occurred.

Elisha's dwelling place, at least at times, was at Mount Car'mel (chap. 2:25 and 4:25), with its outlook and its memories of his great master. At other times we find him in Sama'ria (6:24, 32). Shu'nem, where he raised the dead boy to life, was in the eastern end of the great plain, only a few miles from Mount Gilbo'a, and about sixteen from Mount Car'mel, to which the burdened mother hastened to find and bring Elisha.

Do'than, where the king of Syria attempted to trap and capture the prophet, lies about ten miles north of Sama'ria, to which the blinded soldiers were led. Recall Do'than's connection with the story of Joseph.

Ra'moth-gil'ead, on the Jab'bok, east of Jordan, is a battleground between Syria and Israel again, as it was in David's time. Recall who was killed when it was then besieged. Who was sorely wounded this time? (9:25-29.)

Beth-she'mesh, where Judah rashly fought Israel to her great hurt (14:8-14), lay to the west of Jerusalem toward Philis'tia. Recall what happened there when the Ark was brought to it in Samuel's time.

Israel in the time of Jerobo'am II extended (as in Solomon's time, 1 Kings 8:65) as far north as Ha'math, above Mount Lebanon, and as far south as the Dead Sea (14:25).

The new world powers that overcame Israel and Judah had their capitals in the Mesopota'mian Valley—Nin'veh, capital of Assyria, to the north on the Ti'gris; and Babylon to the south of it, on the Euphra'tes. The places to which the captive Israelites were taken (18:11) lay farther to the north than those to which the people of Judah were later removed.

La'chish and Lib'nah, which Sennacherib's army was be-

sieging when Jerusalem was threatened (19:8), lay below the southern border of Judah.

After Jerusalem had been laid waste, the remnant, under Gedali'ah as governor, had their center at Miz'pah (25:23), the height north of Jerusalem, where Samuel gathered the nation in his day (1 Sam. 7:5).

4. THE CHRONOLOGY

Toward the latter part of this book the history of Judah and Israel runs parallel with that of Assyria and Babylon. For some of the Assyrian reigns tablets have been discovered, containing records and dates. Much labor has been spent by scholars in aligning these statements with the Bible dates. Their conclusions do not all agree, but a few dates may be given as reasonably certain.

The translation of Elijah occurred about 900 B.C., which gives us a round number easy to remember. The victory of Shalmane'ser, king of Assyria, over Ben-ha'dad, king of Syria, is fixed by Assyrian records at the same time.

Thence the history of Israel runs parallel with Judah until the final downfall of Sama'ria, in 718 B.C. Judah's history continues until the downfall of Jerusalem, in 587 B.C.

5. THE PROPHET ELISHA

(1) *Empowered for His Task.* His name, which means "God is Saviour," suggests how his mission, and its accompanying miracles, differ from those of Elijah. He, too, stands mightily for Jeho'vah as the only living and true God, but his work is to show that that same living and true God is the Saviour of those who put their trust in Him.

The first chapter shows Elijah, as his life nears its end, still a prophet of judgment. While King Ahazi'ah's messengers were no doubt sent on a cruel and unrighteous errand, fire from heaven was a judgment upon them which Jesus later plainly said was contrary to the spirit His followers should show. (See Luke 9:51-55.)

The second chapter is a great one; study it carefully. The old prophet puts his successor to the test, but cannot shake him off. He treats him much as he did when he called him (1 Kings 19:19-21). See how Elisha shows (a) spiritual discernment—he senses the nearness of a great event and an

opened heaven; (b) persistence—his master cannot escape him; (c) prevailing faith—he knows, seeks, and receives what he needs most for his great task as the prophet's successor. The "double portion" is the portion which fell to the first-born son in taking up his father's responsibilities. See Deuteronomy 21:17. Elisha was to succeed Elijah as the nation's true defender, better than chariots and horsemen (2:12). In all this what foreshadowing can we see of the baptism of the Spirit on the early disciples, in Acts 2?

(2) *His Deeds of Mercy and Power.* The first is symbolic of his mission. He is to cast salt into the springs of national life (2:19-22), as Jesus' followers are to do today (Matt. 5:13). The stream that flows from Elisha's fountain, near Jericho, still carries with it a broad ribbon of green fertility as it flows through arid sand toward the Jordan.

Judgment, however, is still seen to follow those who irreverently attack God's messenger (2:23-25). The "little children" of Beth'el were what we would call "young hoodlums," but even then we need not conclude that God sent the she bears to tear them.

The third chapter shows us Elisha accompanying the expedition against Mo'ab. Jeho'ram is now king, and the prophet does not hesitate to show what kind of a king he considers him (v. 14). Music is here used to bring Elisha's mind to the point of seeing and declaring what is about to happen. (Recall how David used it for Saul. See 1 Samuel 16:23.) The water that filled the trenches, and in the light of the rising sun looked like blood, led the Mo'abites on to terrible destruction.

The fourth chapter shows the prophet in beneficent deeds in the homes of the people. Here he is more like Jesus, as Elijah was like John the Baptist. Two miracles—at the beginning and at the end of the chapter—deal with the increase of food to supply human need. The longest of all the stories of Elisha's wonderful deeds is the beautiful one of the Shunammite and her son. It is full of human friendliness, tenderness, and pathos. The prophet's method of awakening the dead boy to life is very suggestive of the spiritual contacts needful for those who would bring blessing to boys and girls today.

The healing of the great Syrian general's leprosy is an incident full of application to Christian workers. Na'aman may well have been the great military leader of the combination

of surrounding nations with Syria, which held in check until later the Assyrian power now rising on the Ti'gris. The writer ascribes his victories to Jeho'vah, probably because, in spite of the work of the marauding bands (5:1, 2), they protected Israel.

Note how the story brings out the character of (a) Na'aman; (b) the Israelitish maiden; (c) Elisha; and (d) Geha'zi. It shows, too, the very mistaken idea that a god could only be acceptably worshiped on the soil of his own land (v. 17). Na'aman had yet to learn the great truth that Jeho'vah was the God of the whole earth, that all others were false gods and their symbols merely idols.

(3) *His Influence on the Nation.* The most striking testimony to his value to Israel is seen in the reputation he had gotten among Israel's foes (6:12). His warnings had served again and again as protection against the enemy (6:10). Elisha knew the real protectors of God's servants, and he showed these to his own servant. The *unseen spiritual forces* are the guardian host of those that trust in Jeho'vah (6:14-16).

Moreover, he showed a better way, and indeed a more effective way, to treat an enemy than to smite him. In Sama'ria he taught the king by object-lesson what Paul afterwards taught by precept (Rom. 12:20).

For a time the lesson had its effect. Then Ben-ha'dad made war again (see 1 Kings 20:1) and pushed it to the very gates of Sama'ria. In the hour of terrible hunger, illustrated by the gruesome story of chapter 6:28, 29, the wavering king turned bitterly upon the prophet (v. 31). Elisha calmly prophesied what to human view seemed impossible, but yet promptly occurred. The story of the lepers at the gate makes the outcome very impressive (chapter 7).

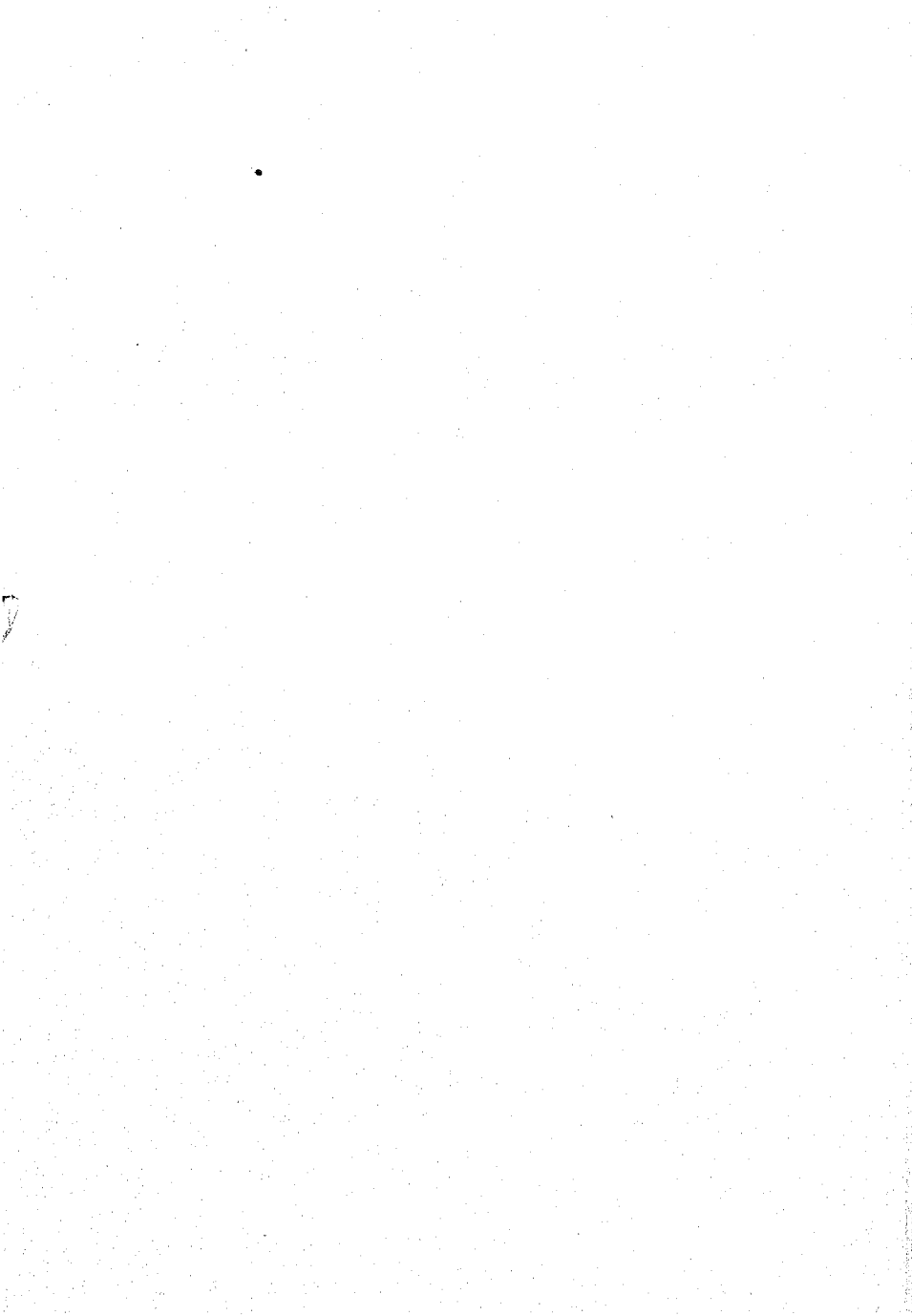
The judgment upon Ahab's wicked line is not yet full, and Elisha (8:7-15) carries out the commission which Elijah had received at Ho'reb (1 Kings 19:15) to anoint Haz'ael king of Syria. Then he sends one of the sons of the prophets to the army besieging Ra'moth-gil'ead, with a vial of oil to anoint Jehu, one of its captains, as king over Israel (9:1-10).

He sees their wrath poured out in the sweeping and bloody destruction of Ahab's line. Once more the history shows him to us in his last illness (13:11-19). Jo'ash is now king of



Francis B. Dicksee

THE ARROW OF THE LORD'S DELIVERANCE



Israel. The prophet puts the king's character to the test, proves him only half-hearted, and prophesies an inconclusive victory at his hands over Syria.

If Jo'ash was half-hearted, certainly Elisha was not. He was for Israel the one man who could put ten thousand to flight. He could speak to king and people without fear or favor. Through him God wrought wonders to prove that He was at the same time mighty, righteous, and gracious. Elisha was very human and what we now call "a good mixer." He loved the homes of the people rather than the court of the king. He lived in times of bloody deeds, and we need not approve all he did, while we recognize in him a prophet of few but searching words and of wondrous and beneficent deeds.

6. JEHU, "THE SCOURGE OF GOD"

Jehosh'aphat, in many ways a good king, made the fatal mistake of marrying his son to Jez'ebel's daughter (chap. 8:18). Very likely this was meant for statesmanship, with the view of bringing the two kingdoms together, but its consequences were wholly evil. Of his successors and Ahab's there is little enough to say except that their deeds were as much alike as their names. Two brothers, Ahazi'ah and Jeho'ram (also written Jo'ram), in Israel, had a sister, Athali'ah, in Judah; who, as wife of another Jeho'ram, and mother of another Ahazi'ah, wrought about as much harm in Judah as her mother, Jez'ebel, did in Israel. We have already seen something of Elisha's relations with Jeho'ram, of Israel, in the campaign against Mo'ab, the visit of Na'aman, and the siege of Sama'ria. When Jeho'ram returns wounded from the campaign against Haz'ael, of Syria, at Ra'moth-gil'ead, his nephew, King Ahazi'ah of Judah, comes on a visit at an hour which proves his own day of doom.

The man to execute judgment had been named back in Elijah's day (1 Kings 19:16). He is fitted for the rough deeds of an executioner: quick and blunt in speech (9:5, 11, 18, 22, etc.) and instant in action (vs. 15, 22, etc.). He is, however, no plotter like Absalom, moved by personal ambition. His commission from the lips of the young prophet (vs. 6-10) gives him his program, and uncompromisingly he executes it. It is all a bloody story (chapters 9 and 10).

Jez'ebel is game to the last. Ahazi'ah and his brothers (perhaps the word is here used in a free sense for kindred, or comrades, see 2 Chronicles 22:1) are caught in the besom of wrath, and so are the priests of Baal.

If judgment were in itself sufficient to destroy evil, better days would surely be at hand, but Jehu, while he wipes out Ba'alism, puts nothing pure and uplifting in its place. People's hearts remain unchanged, and the golden calves of Jerobo'am remain to tempt to ungodly worship.

Athali'ah is left in Judah, and she is inhuman enough to seek to destroy all her kindred in order that she may grip in her own hands the reins of power. But God's promise to David still holds, and a better day dawns with

7. THE REFORM UNDER JO'ASH THE KING; AND JEHO'ADA, THE PRIEST

An interesting story this, of a boy hidden in the Temple for seven years, of a priest who knew how both to plan and to act, of a people weary enough of such a rule as Athali'ah's, and then finally of the deed that Athali'ah called "treason," but which was really deliverance. All this the eleventh chapter tells, while the twelfth relates the slow work of Temple repair and how it was hastened. The fifteenth verse carries a fine lesson in it.

Jo'ash's (his name is also written Jeho'ash) long reign ends badly, and the reason for it is no doubt suggested in verse 3. The Temple is stripped to buy off Haz'ael of Syria, and the king's servants conspire and kill him.

8. ISRAEL'S DOWNGRADE TO RUIN

The rest of Israel's story is dreary enough, except for the long reign of Jerobo'am II, who was abler, but no better than the weaker kings who preceded and followed him. Second Kings gives their names and the length of their reigns, but can say of them little, indeed, that is worth our remembering. Syria is their oppressor at first, and toward the end Assyria. Jeho'ash smote Syria, as Elisha prophesied (13:25). Amazi'ah, of Judah, was rash enough to invite war, and Jeho'ash defeated him, broke down Jerusalem's wall, and carried the Temple treasures to Sama'ria (14:8-14).

Jerobo'am II greatly enlarged Israel's borders. The most

interesting thing about this is the introduction to us of the prophet Jonah as the one who had prophesied these victories. He is the first of the writing prophets to be mentioned in our history. Both Amos and Hosea delivered their messages to Israel during the reign of Jerobo'am II, as we shall find when we come to study their prophecies. We are soon to meet others, including the greatest of them all, Isaiah.

One other king of Jehu's line, Zechari'ah, ruled Israel, and did it as evilly as his successors (see 15:8-13 and 10:30).

Then came one conspiracy after another, leading to several short reigns and one or two longer ones—like that of Pe'kah, of whom we shall find the prophet Isaiah speaking. The last feeble kings paid tribute to Assyria, until, under Pe'kah, Galilee was overrun and its inhabitants taken captive (15:29); and finally, under Hoshe'a, Sama'ria was captured, the rest of Israel deported to Assyria, and the land resettled with people brought from other conquered sections of that overshadowing empire (17:1-6). The policy of the overlords was to destroy the national patriotism of the conquered, and in Israel's case loyalty to the God of Israel. Out of this shifting of population came the Samar'itans, despised by the Jews as a mongrel race (John 4:9).

The underlying reasons are summed up by the writer of 2 Kings, in chapter 17, verses 7 to 23. Find them there and see if any apply to our own day. Notice especially what is said about (1) putting idols in place of the true God; (2) neglecting and ignoring the law of God; (3) disregarding the warnings of the prophets.

9. JUDAH ALSO GOES DOWNWARD

Jo'ash's son, Amazi'ah, succeeded him. Puffed up by victory over E'dom (chap. 14:7), he gave no heed to the parable of Jeho'ash (v. 9) and paid dearly for his temerity (vs. 11-14).

Slain by a conspiracy, his son, Azari'ah, whose name in chap. 16:13 and 30 and in Isaiah's prophecies is written Uzzi'ah, is placed upon the throne when only sixteen. His reign was a very long one (15:2). In the fuller story of it given in 2 Chronicles 26 we will find described the deed which made him a leper.

Jo'tham, after Uzzi'ah's leprosy shut him apart, ruled for his father (15:5) until the latter's death, and succeeded him.

His rule was partly good, but troubled by invasion from Syria and Israel. We shall find interesting sidelights upon his times, as well as upon the wickedness of Ahaz, and the righteous acts of Hezeki'ah, when we study Isaiah's prophecies.

Ahaz has the infamous distinction of exceeding all his predecessors in idolatry, but Manas'sseh is yet to exceed him in shedding innocent blood. Chapter 16, verses 3 and 4, show the extent of his idolatrous abominations. His groveling appeal ("I am thy servant") to Tig'lath-pile'ser to help him against Syria and Israel opened the way for the later incursions of that great empire upon Judah as well as upon Israel. To Ahaz it was left to desecrate the very courts of Jeho'vah by introducing there his idolatrous innovations (16:10-16).

10. THE GREAT REFORMATION UNDER HEZEKI'AH AND ISAIAH

(1) *Reforms.* From all this dark catalogue of sin, and folly, and disaster, what a relief it is to turn, in chapter 18, to the record of good King Hezeki'ah and his reforms. That Ahaz should have such a son is surprising indeed, but if his grandfather was the Zechari'ah referred to in 2 Chronicles 26:5, then the mother's influence may have counteracted the father's; and Isaiah, too, may have had a helpful part. In his destruction of the idols that had corrupted the nation notice his reference to the brazen serpent (18:4), which had been preserved since Moses' day. He called it what it truly was, merely "a piece of brass."

(2) *Assyria's Threats.* With Israel in his power it was inevitable that Sennach'erib should turn next to Judah (18:9ff.). Hezeki'ah refused to submit (v. 7). Eight years passed while the Assyrian king was busy in other parts of his great empire, and then Judah had to face him. Hezeki'ah's faith in his God was at first not strong enough for the severe test. He vainly tried to buy off the invader by stripping his own treasures and those of the Temple.

While the king is besieging La'chish, in the south, a great army under three of his officers appeared before Jerusalem's walls. Their spokesman is Rabsha'keh. Notice how shrewdly he twists the facts, and how blatantly he threatens, in order to break down the defenders' courage. No more

effective answer could possibly have been given him than the silence the king had commanded (18:36). One thing Rab-sha'keh failed to reckon upon in his estimate of the situation—he did not know the true God, nor Isaiah His prophet. Hezeki'ah did; he went, not in kingly robes but in the guise of a needy suppliant, to the house of prayer, and at the same time sent his counselors to the prophet.

A great name here first appears in the Bible, and with Isaiah's entrance a mighty influence begins in the world, the tonic uplift of which is bracingly felt even to this day. Truly God speaks through His servant in chapter 19:6, 7. The Assyrian, as he for the time retires before the threatening power on the Nile (v. 9), warns Judah that her day shall come, as it has to other nations Assyria has conquered. Had Judah's leaders only continued to pray as Hezeki'ah did (19:14-19), and to believe and speak as Isaiah did (vs. 20-34), how different her history would have been! Read Isaiah's words once and again to catch their magnificent spirit of confidence in the living God, and to realize also their prevision of the future (vs. 29-31).

(3) *The King's Life Lengthened.* This time (20:1-11) the king prays for himself, and while he gets what he asks for, evil comes out of it. Lengthened life is not always best. Compare Paul's attitude toward death (2 Cor. 5:8) with Hezeki'ah's; the Christian need never dread death. It was during the fifteen years that were added to Hezeki'ah's life (v. 6) that the son was born (21:1), who was to undo all that his father had spent his life in doing. Prayer for bodily healing and lengthened life must always be conditioned on the will of Him who alone knows what is best.

(4) *The Ambassadors from Babylon.* It was during those added years also that Hezeki'ah made the great mistake of his life. Babylon was emerging as the next great world power soon to subjugate and succeed Assyria. What was no doubt the underlying motive in the visit of its representatives described in chapter 20:12-21? How did Hezeki'ah err in dealing with it? and in what spirit did he meet the prophet's condemnation? (v. 19.)

The reference to the conduit in v. 20 is particularly interesting, because it is only in later times that it has been discovered, and in it was found, in 1880, what is known as the

Silo'am Inscription, placed there when this water-supply system was constructed.

11. MANAS'SEH'S BLOODY DEEDS

Words seem to fail the writer of 2 Kings as he portrays Manas'seh's evil courses. He became king when but a boy and he reigned fifty-five years. He "seduced" the nation to even worse deeds than were done by the inhabitants of the land whom Israel drove out at Joshua's conquest. He introduced a graven image of *Ashe'rah* (21:7 R.V.), with its licentious rites, into the very courts of the Temple. The words of the judgment pronounced upon him (21:10-15) fairly scorch with righteous indignation. Worse than all his fathers, his bones were not laid with them in the tombs of the kings, but in the garden of his own house. Why Hezeki'ah should have had such a son, and why the nation bore with him, and followed his lead, so long, who can tell?

Apparently they waited in the hope that A'mon, his son, would do better; but two years was a long enough time to prove him quite as evil, and his servants slew him. Then the people turned—and not in vain—to a boy of eight, and put Josi'ah on the throne.

12. THE LAST REVIVAL, UNDER KING JOSI'AH

Once more, before Judah's sun sets, the sky brightens. The outstanding event in Josi'ah's reign is the finding of a roll of the Law, which had been stowed away and lost to sight and knowledge, perhaps for generations, but probably during Manas'seh's evil reign, in some one of the Temple rooms.

Josi'ah has grown to manhood now, is in his twenty-sixth year (22:1, 3). He stirs the priests to hasten the slow repairs, and the finding of the roll is the result. The importance of the discovery of this copy of the Law—probably it contained what we have in Deuteronomy—is shown by the fulness of detail with which it is told in chapters 22 and 23. No doubt the blessings and the cursings, the exhortations and the warnings, of Deuteronomy 27, 28, and 29, were in it. The reading made a deep impression on the king and people, and Josi'ah made a thorough "housecleaning" of all that promoted idol worship, and kept a great Passover.

Evidently Assyrian rule was weak at this time, or Josi'ah

could not have gone to Beth'el—and other cities of conquered Israel—and there destroyed Jerobo'am's altar and the high places, thus fulfilling the prophecies spoken in 1 Kings 13. A worthy epitaph he won (23:25), but he was only able to check, and not to reverse, Judah's downhill course.

He came to his death by needlessly risking his own head, and his nation, between the two great world forces then coming into conflict. Pha'raoh-ne'cho of Egypt was a powerful enough king to challenge Assyria to combat. The statement of chapter 23:29 is too brief to be very clear. The fuller account in 2 Chronicles 35:20-24 shows Josi'ah to have acted rashly. He paid the penalty with his life.

13. JUDAH GOES INTO CAPTIVITY

The last kings of Judah were as feeble as the last kings of Israel. Jeho'ahaz's grandfather (23:31) was *not* Jeremi'ah the prophet. Had it been so, the young man's career, and that of the nation with him, might have been very different. He and his two brothers and a nephew all had their chance—a late and small one it must be admitted—but no one of the three followed Josi'ah's course. Pha'raoh-ne'cho dealt with two of them much as he did with Josi'ah (23:33-35).

Then Nebuchadne'zar, king of Babylon, took *his* hand in the punishment of Judah for her sins (24:1), while invading bands from the smaller neighboring nations made life miserable indeed. Babylon pushed Egypt back onto her own soil (v. 7), and besieged Jerusalem (v. 10). The Temple was despoiled, and all the leading people of the nation carried, with Jeho'achin, into captivity at Babylon (vs. 10-16).

The third of Josi'ah's sons was put upon the throne under the name of Zedeki'ah. His resistance to the Babylonian yoke brought Nebuchadne'zar a second time to Jerusalem, and this time, after a prolonged siege, he wiped the dish clean (24:8-10. See 21:13). Zedeki'ah's sons are slain, so as to remove all possibility of a lineal successor, and he himself is carried, blinded and fettered, to Babylon. Verses 13 to 21 contain other bitter details.

A governor, Gedali'ah, is put in charge of the poorest of the people, who are left to cultivate the land. A plot led by one of the seed royal, who had not been transported, ends in the governor's death, and the remnant flee to Egypt.

Jeremi'ah, as we will later learn from his prophecy, was taken with them. There, back in the land from which their great ancestor Moses had led them, and in the Euphrates Valley from which their earlier great ancestor Abraham had come, our book sadly leaves them. *But the end is not yet.*

14. SOME LESSONS FROM THE BOOK

(1) The outstanding figure is not any one of the many kings, but the prophet Elisha. Influence does not depend so much on position as on personality.

(2) Three kings "wrought righteousness": Jo'ash, Hezeki'ah, and Josi'ah. Two were mere children when crowned. Notice at what age each vigorously began religious reforms (12:6; 18:2; and 22:3). Back of each was a religious leader, either a priest or a prophet. Name them. (Jeremi'ah's name does not appear, but when we study his prophecies we find him the great figure back of the events in the last four chapters here. God's spokesmen have been the inspiration of all that is best in human history.)

(3) Israel's two and a half centuries, from Jerobo'am to the end, witnessed nine changes of dynasty. David's line remained unbroken during Judah's much longer period. God had promised it (8:19), but the revivals account for it. Israel's course was unbrokenly *downward*; Judah's was down and up, down and up, down and up, and finally *down*.

(4) Even in the reforms of Jo'ash and Hezeki'ah the high places were allowed to remain. It was natural from the beginning to build altars on the heights. It was easy when idolatry ruled the land to use these high places for idol worship. So they remained a constant temptation toward backsliding. It is wise to put out of sight, or completely destroy, everything that tempts to evil.

(5) Some of the fine passages of the book, with their individual lessons, are:

6:16. God has mighty unseen protectors for those who trust Him.

12:15. Workmen for God should ever be worthy of trust.

14:6. Individual responsibility.

17:32, 33. An impossible compromise.

19:15, 19. The prayer that brought an answer of help.

19:31. The power that overrules history.

To these add other verses that have their special message for *you*.

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON SECOND KINGS

1. What portion of the book relates to the *two* kingdoms, and what portion to Judah only? How much longer did Judah last than Israel? Why?

2. With what events and what great leaders does the book begin? How did Elisha prepare to become Elijah's successor? Compare his character and work with Elijah's.

3. Mention some of the mighty deeds Elisha did. How were they meant to show the same truth that is found in his name?

4. Mention two of the most influential kings of Israel, and two of Judah (other than those mentioned in question 7), and give a few leading facts about each.

5. What evil woman had been brought into Israel by marriage? How did her harmful influence extend through two sons and a daughter?

6. Whom did Elisha anoint, either by his own hands, or through his messenger, to bring judgment upon Ahab's wicked line, and how did they do it?

7. What three kings wrought great reforms in Judah, and what feature was outstanding in the reforms of each? What religious leader coöperated with and influenced each of these kings?

8. Why did idolatry have such a grip, and what various forms did it take? What form of worship did Jeroboam set up, and why did it exert so long and so harmful an influence?

9. Describe some of the relations of three world empires with the little states of Israel and Judah.

10. What are some of the best lessons of all this history for us today?

SECOND GENERAL REVIEW

ISRAEL AND JUDAH TO THE CAPTIVITY

COVERING CHAPTERS SIX TO TEN

1. What was the state (1) of government and (2) of religion during the period of the judges? Name three of the leading judges, and tell for each (1) the region of his activities; and (2) the most important facts regarding him.

2. What part of the history is described in each of the four books that are called Samuel and Kings? Why do these books have their names? Mention any poems found in them, and tell why they are there, and what is fine about each.

3. Draw a simple outline of the Holy Land as it was in the times of the judges and kings. Locate on it two places connected with each of the following: (1) Samuel; (2) David; (3) Solomon; (4) Jerobo'am; (5) Elijah; (6) Elisha. For each place tell in a sentence some important event that happened there.

4. Tell, in not more than fifty words each, the outstanding facts about (1) Gid'eon; (2) Ruth; (3) Saul; (4) Absalom; (5) Ahab; (6) Hezeki'ah.

5. Compare the prophetic careers of Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, and Isaiah as we have seen them in the books of Samuel and Kings. How did the work of the prophet develop and change during the period thus far studied?

6. How was worship carried on during the period of the judges and kings? Trace the history of the Ark from the time of Eli to the Captivity.

7. Why did the people so often turn to the worship of idols? What was the evil influence in this regard (1) of Solomon; (2) of Jerobo'am; (3) of Jez'ebel; (4) of Manas'seh?

8. Who was each of the following: (1) E'hud; (2) Na-o'mi; (3) Na'aman; (4) Ab'ner; (5) Mephib'osheth; (6) Joab; (7) Athali'ah; (8) Jehoi'ada; (9) Geha'zi; (10) Josi'ah?

9. Which, in your opinion, had most influence during these periods, the priest, the prophet, or the king? Give facts to support your answer.

10. Why did captivity finally become necessary both for Israel and for Judah? Why did Judah last so much longer than Israel? Give three principal lessons for our own time that we should learn from this history.

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